

BOTTOM DOGS

EDWARD
DAHLBERG

INTRODUCTION BY

D. H. LAWRENCE

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
COPYRIGHT, 1930, BY EDWARD DAHLBERG
© 1961 by Edward Dahlberg

*City Lights Books are published at
261 Columbus Avenue, San Fran-
cisco 11, California, and distributed
nationally to bookstores by the
Paper Editions Corporation. Over-
seas distributors: The Scorpion
Press, 11 Rofant Rd., Northwood,
Middlesex, England.*

C O N T E N T S

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. TEDDY ROOSEVELT DAYS	1
II. UNDERNEATH THE 8TH STREET VIADUCT .	22
III. THE NEWCUMBER	40
IV. HERMAN MUSH TATE	72
V. BONEHEAD-STAR-WOLFE	90
VI. CEDAR AVENUE NIGHTS	118
VII. STAR LADIES BARBER SHOP	128
VIII. THAT RACEHOSS BLADDERS	145
IX. HARRY COEN'S HIGH CLASS BAKERY . .	158
X. RIDIN' THE BLINDS	176
XI. FRISCO	213
XII. L.A. THE Y.M.C.A.	219
XIII. THE AFTER BIBLE COFFEE CLASS . . .	228
XIV. SOLOMON'S DANCEPALACE	257

For my Friend
JONATHAN WILLIAMS

PREFACE

Tolstoi once said: 'Many men write books, but few are ashamed of them afterwards.'

It was Arabella York, second wife of Richard Aldington, and one of the heroines in *Aaron's Rod*, who sent the MS. of *Bottom Dogs* to D. H. Lawrence. In a letter to me Lawrence spoke of the bony, spartan quality of the novel. I had deliberately expunged some of the joys of this globe, sun, grass, river — the melons and the leeks for which the Israelites pined — in order not to write a slavish book about a society which concealed its filth and cruelty, and that doomed so many of the boys who became vagabonds, pariahs, or hopeless drudges in great cement cities. This sounds a little didactic, but first of all I wanted to tell a story, and maybe I did. But the defect of the novel lies in its jargon.

When I finished *Bottom Dogs* in Brussels and returned to America, I was quite ill in the hospital at Peterborough, New Hampshire. Spite of the tender attention given me by the late widow of the composer, Edward MacDowell, I was slow in recovering. The real malady was *Bottom Dogs*.

There were other authors in Paris in the early twenties, John Hermann and Robert McAlmon, now deceased, who had a passion for what was called the American scene. With all charity to the dead and with very little toward myself, I believe we failed because we thought we could not write about the midwest, Texas or Montana except in the rude American vernacular. There was a great deal of noise about regionalists then who were merely local dun-derheads and yokels of a Main Street intelligentsia.

Their screeds were not unlike those held by the Zen Buddhists and others today.

The harm done to the English language has been immense; imagine anyone composing one of the great *Pensées* of pascal in an abominable tongue; the adages in the *Haiku* are written in a savory language. Spirit is as imponderable as light and the raiment thereof are the lilies or the words that are dearer to us than Solomon's robes. Vile words come from the rabble; wit can be ribald though as well-lettered as Congreve or Wycherley's plays.

We don't require four lettered words to be erotical, or a whole hogshead of vice to make us pensive. We know all the W.C. pornography anyway, and don't go to books to acquire more sins than we already have. Anyway, sex on the printed page is usually a great bore. Our books are extremely libidinous, and yet we are not amorists. Admitting that we are a licentious band of rebels let us not forget that a little dirt goes a long way.

Plain humble words have more health in them than the latest neologism invented by an advertising scribbler whose sole aim is to sell an adulterated product to a foolish populace. Edmond Goncourt spoke of the craze of originality that had been the curse of literature in his own day. A great deal of the fugitive, humbug vocabulary is what D. H. Lawrence called the American fetish of the wild and the repulsive. Books, like people, are seldom what they seem; do not expect that each volume is the lamb for Abraham, or as Isabella Gardner Tate has it in one of her lovely poems: 'Fathers of Isaacs cease dissembling, Will every thicket yield a ram?'

The other day I was perusing a little essay by Leo

Tolstoi on the price of flour which moved me enormously. This is straight, plain writing, I thought. As for the 'spirit of place,' whose significance I scarcely deny, Henry David Thoreau's *Week on the Concord and the Merrimac* or *The Maine Woods* is an American Pisgah. Nor should anyone with great feeling for prose fail to read Herbert Read's *Annals of Innocence and Experience*, the Vergilian Georgics of our times.

Good novels beget warm human books, just as Abraham begat Isaac and Isaac Jacob. I have come to believe that we can be indigenous though we are profoundly affected by Gogol's *Dead Souls* done in a traditional manner, or go to Cobbet's *Rural Rides*, or Thomas Nash's *The Unfortunate Traveler* done in the Elizabethan language of the artisan. I am no foe of the diction of a civilized laborer who does truthful, useful work. Bad or stupid labor produces evil words; what a delight there is in the nautical dialect of Dampier or in the rough, soldierly narrative of Bernal Diaz. What is abominable is the cult of ugliness and the nonsensical credo about being up to date and brand new. Why write savage, loveless books with the vulgar obscenities of a street arab. We have been so determined to destroy the Puritan lechers and all the sexual mania of the social reformers that we find it essential to spew forth every vice in human skin and in words dirtier than Job's muckheap. I once wrote to Sherwood Anderson and told him that *Winesburg, Ohio* was right and that *Bottom Dogs* was wrong because his was warm and human and mine was written in a rough, bleak idiom.

Do we invent poems and novels to be coarser, or to

be gravel? Among the Incas hard ground signified a barren heart. The eminent writer, Josephine Herbst, whose volume on John Bartram is a tender gospel of love, has said of *Bottom Dogs*: 'Its limitations set hardened boundaries beyond which Dahlberg was fated to pass or to lose his integral vision in the meaningless violence of typical American fiction. But more like a European writer than any American, he was willing to go down to rot, if need be, in order that he might come up again in a rebirth more central to his vision of an imaginative beyond.' Sibyls or seers we must be so seeded in all ground, European and American, if we are to come up as the glorious flowers of our own new earth, still *terra incognita* to all of us.

— Edward Dahlberg

Ca'n Peretons
Soller de Mallorca,
España
1961

INTRODUCTION

When we think of America, and of her huge success, we never realize how many failures have gone, and still go to build up that success. It is not till you live in America, and go a little under the surface, that you begin to see how terrible and brutal is the mass of failure that nourishes the roots of the gigantic tree of dollars. And this is especially so in the country, and in the newer parts of the land, particularly out west. There you see how many small ranches have gone broke in despair, before the big ranches scoop them up and profit by all the back-breaking, profitless, grim labour of the pioneer. In the west you can still see the pioneer work of tough, hard first-comer, individuals, and it is astounding to see how often these individuals, pioneer first-comers who fought like devils against their difficulties, have been defeated, broken, their efforts and their amazing hard work lost, as it were, on the face of the wilderness. But it is these hard-necked failures who really broke the resistance of the stubborn, obstinate country, and made it easier for the second wave of exploiters to come in with money and reap the harvest. The real pioneer in America fought like hell and suffered till the soul was ground out of him: and then, nine times out of ten, failed, was beaten. That is why pioneer literature, which, even from the glimpses one has of it, contains the amazing

Odyssey of the brute fight with savage conditions of the western continent, hardly exists, and is absolutely unpopular. Americans will not stand for the pioneer stuff, except in small, sentimentalized doses. They know too well the grimness of it, the savage fight and the savage failure which broke the back of the country but also broke something in the human soul. The spirit and the will survived: but something in the soul perished: the softness, the floweriness, the natural tenderness. How could it survive the sheer brutality of the fight with that American wilderness, which is so big, vast, and obdurate!

The savage America was conquered and subdued at the expense of the instinctive and intuitive sympathy of the human soul. The fight was too brutal. It is a great pity some publisher does not undertake a series of pioneer records and novels, the genuine unsweetened stuff. The books exist. But they are shoved down into oblivion by the common will-to-forget. They show the strange brutality of the struggle, what would have been called in the old language the breaking of the heart. America was not colonized and "civilized" until the heart was broken in the American pioneers. It was a price that was paid. The heart was broken. But the will, the determination to conquer the land and make it submit to productivity, this was not broken. The will-to-success and the will-to-produce became clean and indomitable once the sympathetic heart was broken.

By the sympathetic heart, we mean that instinctive

belief which lies at the core of the human heart, that people and the universe itself is *ultimately* kind. This belief is fundamental, and in the old language is embodied in the doctrine: God is good. Now given an opposition too ruthless, a fight too brutal, a betrayal too bitter, this belief breaks in the heart, and is no more. Then you have either despair, bitterness, and cynicism: or you have the much braver reaction which says: God is not good, but the human will is indomitable, it cannot be broken, it will succeed against all odds. It is not God's business to be good and kind, that is man's business. God's business is to be indomitable. And man's business is essentially the same.

This is, roughly, the American position today, as it was the position of the Red Indian when the white man came, and of the Aztec and of the Peruvian. So far as we can make out, neither Red-skin nor Aztec nor Inca had any conception of a "good" god. They conceived of implacable, indomitable Powers, which is very different. And that seems to me the essential American position to-day. Of course the white American believes that man should behave in a kind and benevolent manner. But this is a social belief and a social gesture, rather than an individual flow. The flow from the heart, the warmth of fellow-feeling which has animated Europe and been the best of her humanity, individual, spontaneous, flowing in thousands of little passionate currents often conflicting, this seems unable to persist on the American soil. Instead you get

the social creed of benevolence and uniformity, a mass *will*, and an inward individual retraction, an isolation, an amorphous separateness like grains of sand, each grain isolated upon its own will, its own indomitableness, its own implacability, its own unyielding, yet heaped together with all the other grains. This makes the American mass the easiest mass in the world to rouse, to move. And probably, under a long stress, it would make it the most difficult mass in the world to hold together.

The deep psychic change which we call the breaking of the heart, the collapse of the flow of spontaneous warmth between a man and his fellows, happens of course now all over the world. It seems to have happened to Russia in one great blow. It brings a people into a much more complete social unison, for good or evil. But it throws them apart in their private individual emotions. Before, they were like cells in a complex tissue, alive and functioning diversely in a vast organism composed of family, clan, village, nation. Now, they are like grains of sand, friable, heaped together in a vast inorganic democracy.

While the old sympathetic glow continues, there are violent hostilities between people, but they are not secretly repugnant to one another. Once the heart is broken, people become repulsive to one another secretly, and they develop social benevolence. They smell in each other's nostrils. It has been said often enough of more primitive or old-world peoples, who live together in a state of blind mistrust but

also of close physical connection with one another, that they have no noses. They are so close, the flow from body to body is so powerful, that they hardly smell one another, and hardly are aware at all of offensive human odours that madden the new civilizations. As it says in this novel: The American senses other people by their sweat and their kitchens. By which he means, their repulsive effluvia. And this is basically true. Once the blood-sympathy breaks, and only the nerve-sympathy is left, human beings become secretly intensely repulsive to one another, physically, and sympathetic only mentally and spiritually. The secret physical repulsion between people is responsible for the perfection of American "plumbing," American sanitation, and American kitchens, utterly white-enamelled and antiseptic. It is revealed in the awful advertisements such as those about "halitosis," or bad breath. It is responsible for the American nausea at coughing, spitting, or any of those things. The American townships don't mind hideous litter of tin cans and paper and broken rubbish. But they go crazy at the sight of human excrement.

And it is this repulsion from the physical neighbour that is now coming up in the consciousness of the great democracies, in England, America, Germany. The old flow broken, men could enlarge themselves for a while in transcendentalism, Whitmanish "adhesiveness" of the social creature, noble supermen, lifted above the baser functions. For the last hundred years man has been elevating himself

above his "baser functions" and posing around as a transcendentalist, a superman, a perfect social being, a spiritual entity. And now, since the war, the collapse has come.

Man has no ultimate control of his own consciousness. If his nose doesn't notice stinks, it just doesn't, and there's the end of it. If his nose is so sensitive that a stink overpowers him, then again he's helpless. He can't prevent his senses from transmitting and his mind from registering what it does register.

And now, man has begun to be overwhelmingly conscious of the repulsiveness of his neighbour, particularly of the physical repulsiveness. There it is, in James Joyce, in Aldous Huxley, in André Gide, in modern Italian novels like *Parigi*—in all the very modern novels, the dominant note is the repulsiveness, intimate physical repulsiveness of human flesh. It is the expression of absolutely genuine experience. What the young feel intensely, and no longer so secretly, is the extreme repulsiveness of other people.

It is, perhaps, the inevitable result of the transcendental bodiless brotherliness and social "adhesiveness" of the last hundred years. People rose superior to their bodies, and soared along, till they had exhausted their energy in this performance. The energy once exhausted, they fell with a struggling plunge, not down into their bodies again, but into the cess-pools of the body.

The modern novel, the very modern novel, has passed quite away from tragedy. An American novel

like *Manhattan Transfer* has in it still the last notes of tragedy, the sheer spirit of suicide. An English novel like *Point Counter Point* has gone beyond tragedy into exacerbation and continuous nervous repulsion. Man is so nervously repulsive to man, so screamingly, nerve-rackingly repulsive! This novel goes one further. Man just *smells*, offensively and unbearably, not to be borne. The human stink.

The inward revulsion of man away from man, which follows on the collapse of the physical sympathetic flow, has a slowly increasing momentum, a wider and wider swing. For a long time the *social* belief and benevolence of man towards man keeps pace with the secret physical repulsion of man away from man. But ultimately, inevitably, the one outstrips the other. The benevolence exhausts itself, the repulsion only deepens. The benevolence is external and extra-individual. But the revulsion is inward and personal. The one gains over the other. Then you get a gruesome condition, such as is displayed in this book.

The only motive power left is the sense of revulsion away from people, the sense of the repulsiveness of the neighbour. It is a condition we are rapidly coming to—a condition displayed by the intellectuals much more than by the common people. Wyndham Lewis gives a display of the utterly repulsive effect people have on him, but he retreats into the intellect to make his display. It is a question of manner and manners. The effect is the same. It is

the same exclamation: They stink! My God, they stink!

And in this process of recoil and revulsion, the affective consciousness withers with amazing rapidity. Nothing I have ever read has astonished me more than the "Orphanage" chapters of this book. There I realized with amazement how rapidly the human psyche can strip itself of its awareness and its emotional contacts, and reduce itself to a sub-brutal condition of simple gross persistence. It is not animality—far from it. Those boys are much less than animals. They are cold wills functioning with a minimum of consciousness. The amount that they are *not* aware of is perhaps the most amazing aspect of their character. They are brutally and deliberately unaware. They have no hopes, no desires even. They have even no will-to-exist, for existence even is too high a term. They have a strange, stony will-to-persist, that is all. And they persist by reaction, because they still feel the repulsiveness of each other, of everything, even of themselves.

Of course the author exaggerates. The boy Lorry "Always had his nose in a book"—and he must have got things out of the books. If he had taken the intellectual line, like Mr. Huxley or Mr. Wyndham Lewis, he would have harped on the intellectual themes, the essential feeling being the same. But he takes the non-intellectual line, is in revulsion against the intellect too, so we have the stark reduction to a persistent minimum of the human consciousness. It is a minimum lower than the savage, lower than

the African Bushman. Because it is a *willed* minimum, sustained from inside by resistance, brute resistance against any flow of consciousness except that of the barest, most brutal egoistic self-interest. It is a phenomenon, and pre-eminently an American phenomenon. But the flow of repulsion, inward physical revulsion of man away from man, is passing over all the world. It is only perhaps in America, and in a book such as this, that we see it most starkly revealed.

After the orphanage, the essential theme is repeated over a wider field. The state of revulsion continues. The young Lorry is indomitable. You can't destroy him. And at the same time, you can't catch him. He will recoil from everything, and nothing on earth will make him have a positive feeling, of affection or sympathy, or connection.

The tragedian, like Theodore Dreiser and Sherwood Anderson, still dramatizes his defeat and is in love with himself in his defeated rôle. But the Lorry Lewis is in too deep a state of revulsion to dramatize himself. He almost deliberately finds himself repulsive too. And he goes on, just to see if he can hit the world without destroying himself. Hit the world not to destroy it, but to experience in himself how repulsive it is.

Kansas City, Beatrice, Nebraska, Omaha, Salt Lake City, Portland, Oregon, Los Angeles, he finds them all alike, nothing, if not repulsive. He covers the great tracts of prairie, mountain, forest, coast-range, without seeing anything but a certain desert scali-

ness. His consciousness is resistant, shuts things out, and reduces itself to a minimum.

In the Y.M.C.A. it is the same. He has his gang. But the last word about them is that they stink, their effluvia is offensive. He goes with women, but the thought of women is inseparable from the thought of sexual disease and infection. He thrills to the repulsiveness of it, in a terrified, perverted way. His associates—which means himself also—read Zarathustra and Spinoza, Darwin and Hegel. But it is with a strange, external superficial mind that has no connection with the affective and effective self. One last desire he has—to write, to put down his condition in words. His will-to-persist is intellectual also. Beyond this, nothing.

It is a genuine book, as far as it goes, even if it is an objectionable one. It is, in psychic disintegration, a good many stages ahead of *Point Counter Point*. It reveals a condition that not many of us have reached, but towards which the trend of consciousness is taking us, all of us, especially the young. It is, let us hope, a *ne plus ultra*. The next step is legal insanity, or just crime. The book is perfectly sane: yet two more strides and it is criminal insanity. The style seems to me excellent, fitting the matter. It is sheer bottom-dog style, the bottom-dog mind expressing itself direct, almost as if it barked. That directness, that unsentimental and non-dramatized thoroughness of setting down the under-dog mind surpasses anything I know. I don't want to read any more books like this. But I am glad to have read this one, just

to know what is the last word in repulsive consciousness, consciousness in a state of repulsion. It helps one to understand the world, and saves one the necessity of having to follow out the phenomenon of physical repulsion any further, for the time being.

D. H. LAWRENCE.

BANDOL, 1929.

BOTTOM DOGS

CHAPTER I

TEDDY ROOSEVELT DAYS

She moved from town to town, selling hair switches, giving osteopathic treatments, going on again when she felt the place had been played out. In this way she hoped to save a little money and establish herself in some thriving city. She had taken Lorry with her wherever she went.

When he was three she had a shop in Dallas, Texas; she made money there, the cattleranchers were good spenders; they liked to get a manicure and have a lady hold their hands, and always tipped well. A lot of horses were bred and shipped out of Dallas. The Dallas stockyards attracted all the big horsedealers from Omaha, Kansas City and Chicago; and there was heavy trading and swopping of mares and thoroughbreds. The banks were coming up too. The Dallas streets were well paved and a cow-puncher, drifting into town for the week-end, could take a gal out for a buggy ride and go out a long distance before he hit the country road. The ranchers got to know the little shop and liked whiling away a hot, hossfly afternoon getting spruced up and jabbering to the little lady who ran it; so that when one day they noticed a sign "closed," over the door, they wondered why Lizzie, as they called her, had gone off. Some said that a slick little dude, one of those know-it-all derbies from New York, with

waxed moustache and patent-leather shoes had been hanging around and bothering her till she had to leave town. But no one ever did seem to get the story straight. Anyway, the cattlemen in and around Dallas all said she was sure one nice sweet little lady and that it was a gol darn shame that a pimp like that who never did any woman any good should get the best of her.

A year later Elizabeth Lewis was in Memphis, Tennessee, manicuring the nails, curling the hair, and massaging the bodies of high-tone whores. They were generous, paid her well, and were very attentive to little Lorry. At first she did not suspect their trade; they lived in such classy red brick houses that she believed they were the aristocracy of Memphis. Those swell women thought a great deal of Lizzie, and when they heard that she had gone off, they were right sorry. One, who used to give Lorry bonbons, and was a little more serious and friendly with her, said some sawed-off spider from New York had been following her and was leeching her money, so that she had to slip out when she got the chance. Another said that the climate was too damp for her and the kid, and that he had gotten a cough which frightened her. But no one was real certain.

She then moved on to Denver; but the consumptives there depressed her. Finally she established herself in Kansas City in an old frame building underneath the 8th Street viaduct. Kansas City was booming; oil had been found; the wheat harvests

had been excellent, and there was plenty of money floating around. The town was wide-open; the saloons were going strong; all the cowpunchers and stockmen came into Kansas City for a spree. Everybody seemed to be coining money; Teddy Roosevelt was a great president, they said. The stockyards and the Armour and Swift packing houses had attracted many country hicks who came there to make their fortune and take on big city ways. Lots of young kids, girls of fifteen, who didn't want to go to school, or work in a one-horse town like St. Joseph or Joplin, drifted in and got jobs in the west bottoms of the city and got citified in uptown restaurants doing the "12th Street Blues." Those, everyone said, were live-wire days before the dead administration of the illustrious Howard Taft.

She did fairly well there. She had, she said, only ten fingers, and one could only make so much with them and not one cent more. Most people took her for French; that flattered her: she was very short, squat, with a long, pointed nose, a rather sensitive mouth, the corners of which were already beginning to turn down, and small, chubby arms that ran into square, hard-working hands. A great deal of transient trade came to her shop for tonsorial attention. The shop was right underneath the viaduct on the way to the old Union Depot, and out-of-towners, with valises in their hands, who hadn't had time to get dolled up for their Kansas City broads, dropped in for a close shave and some hair tonic. Ranchers from Montana would straggle in after they had come out

of the saloon next door for a massage and a doze to sober up; sometimes they were pretty well soused and lickered up but she knew how to handle them; and they all thought the world of her, as they said, because she was just one smart little lady. She was jolly, still strong and would laugh sometimes until she almost fell out of her chair. She had a right joshing way with her, and knew how to work an old codger for a big sack of fruit without involving herself. When a big leather-skinned cattlerancher from Wyoming or the corn-state, Nebraska, would come in, give her a big job, shave, haircut, massage, a fat tip, and buy her Tokay grapes and bananas to boot, she was gleeful for the whole day. She felt she had accomplished something and was good-natured with everybody. However, she knew when to stop; she never went too far.

"Oh," she would say, "come on, Mr. Bob; be a sport; get me a few oranges. We'll go to the Dago fruit store at the corner."

All this she did in such a jolly, coaxing manner, laughing all the time, until the tears were in her eyes, that they simply could not resist her.

"Lizzie," they would call her for short, "I do believe you're a Jew; upon my very soul I do; well, let's get along."

She never asked for money, and they never made any exacting demands of her.

Lorry got on to some of her sly ways and would bother her for pennies when she was busy with a customer. As time went on, she began to tell her

steady customers that he was getting uncontrollable and that she did not know what to do with him. But then again she would measure him up and say, "Goodness, how ugly you are; you're as black as a nigger"; and if some one was present she would turn to him—"but he's as smart as a whip."

At heart she was exceedingly proud of him; he did well at school, though she never saw him open a book for long, and had a sweet voice which he let out in great volumes when many customers were waiting their next. He was always friendly with everyone, got on well with the negro bootblack who taught him to play checkers. For a long time he would do nothing else, all week working up his game, till Saturday when the stockmen came to town. Then he would pick out one whom he thought good-natured, and, green at the game, talk to him, and wind up in a checker game with him, the stakes ten cents if he won, nothing for the other fellow if he lost.

His mother sent him to a Catholic parochial school where she had to pay for his instructions; she wanted him to learn German and wanted him off the streets as much as possible. Lorry was very unhappy there; for the sisters who rustled through the halls were very aloof and distant, and the boys were bullies and belonged to gangs. And when he was called on to recite he was in such a daze, that he could never get anything out of his mouth; so that he passed for a stupid fellow. Later he went to the George Washington public school on Independence Avenue. Most of

the students were Italians who were always hanging around the city courthouse. They were supposed to be terrible fighters and quick with their knives.

In the afternoons, around four o'clock, when school was out, Lorry would run home, get an apple or if he had a penny buy an ice-cream cone or an all-day sucker at the candy store and then play often alone in the alley that went through from 7th to 8th Street. At one end was a carriage maker where he used to go sometimes to get some axle grease for a little wagon he had which one of the women who worked for his mother had given him. Or he would rummage through a deep wooden box in back of an umbrella factory looking for old umbrella spokes.

Most of all he liked playing about the backstage of the Grand Opera House at the 7th Street side of the alley. He used to look there for stage money and pieces of colored cloth. Sometimes when his mother kept open late, especially on Saturday evenings when the shop did not close till midnight, he would climb on the back platform, wait for a between-the-act, when the men would come out for some air and a smoke, and then slip through the door inside. He hardly knew what to look at first. The tremendous asbestos curtain, the fake columns, the canvas bungalows, the shifting of scenes, the electricians hurrying about, the footlights with their clean glow, near him, the colored lighting reflectors, pieces of green and blue celluloid lying on the floor,—he was right in all that, backstage of an honest-to-goodness theater, with the swell-looking actors' with their pencilled eye-

brows and swallow tails, next to the star with her marvellous spangled gown, the perfume from her red hair in his nostrils; he couldn't wait to tell Noah, Muriel, and Tisha about that. They would envy him, look up to him, and he would go through it with such carelessness, just like that. . . .

One Saturday night, after the first act, the watchman at the backstage door caught him standing around listening to the talk of the chorines and watching them smoke cigarettes and blow blue circles into the air. He was entranced and did not notice the watchman who approached him from behind and gave him a solid kick. He fell against the chair, his arms sprawling over the lap of one of the chorus girls, upsetting her. "Why, what the hell's the matter with you, you goddam idiot?" she cried, turning on the watchman.

"Well, that kid ain't got no damn business in here," he answered.

"Well, he's going to stay here," she retorted.

The others chimed in and the watchman walked away muttering some oath. She picked Lorry up, wiped his eyes, took him to a faucet, and washed his face. The next act coming on, she asked him to wait for her.

She took a fancy to Lorry, his open brown eyes, his affectionate nature, his cute bashful gestures. For a week he lived in a halo of glory. She was a chorus girl in a traveling stock company in the musical comedy and burlesque, "The Question Girl." She bought him an orchestra seat for a matinée perform-

ance, gave him a big box of Lowney's chocolates which she got at Jenkins' Cigar Store, at the corner of 8th and Walnut, where they raffled off every Saturday night the latest model Buicks which were then the style, and gave him a white oblong engraved card with her name on it so that he could get in to see her behind the stage after the show. She taught him the main musical theme running through "The Question Girl," and sitting on her lap, he would sing to her in a high sweet voice, "Oh, gee, be sweet to me, kid, I'm awfully fond of you. . . ." After he had finished singing she would kiss him and tell him that he was her beau. Warm all over with red-apple pleasure he would hug her close.

When the other chorines would come around, he would retire within himself, become shy, taciturn, as though his tongue was out. They would tease him, tousle his hair, and mock him: "See the devil in those brown eyes. What a pity he ain't a little older. Well, the good men are either married or too young to be."

After they went off, he would look at her out of the corner of his eye. Only on the stage could one be so lovely, he thought. He had never seen such perfect red lips except in a picture on a calendar the proprietor of the Owl Drug Store had given his mother during an anniversary sale in which Grandpa's Tar Soap was being pushed; and never had he had the feel of such soft, luxurious silk—the silk of her dress, the suggestion of stage make-up on it. Her name was Grace Thomas and she stayed at the high-tone

Baltimore Hotel. He wished he could be her steady beau.

Then when he saw his mother, her face, white with sweaty lines, like that old oily oilcloth he had to eat off on the table, he looked as though he had just found a fly in his soup. He didn't want to go back to that, watch his mother cook soup in black, sooty pots on that rusty, cockroachy gas range behind the shop; or try to eat his meat, while one of the barber girls, coming backshop in her haircutting apron, flushed the toilet, which was right next to the ice box, and whose wooden partition only rose half-way up to the ceiling and had no roof.

He wanted to tell Grace Thomas to take him with her, so that he could grow up to be a jigger. When "The Question Girl" went on the road again, she told him to be sure to look for her again the next year. She kissed him; he held her tight and cried.

They stayed on in Kansas City, though his mother complained that business was going to the dogs. There were rumors that the old depot was going to be torn down and that the largest Union Station in the world was to be put up in a new part of the town, out somewhere on 15th and Main Street, which had not begun to be built up yet. Business, however, everybody said, was moving up that way already. Smeltzer's Sportwearhouse was thinking of going up past 12th and Walnut, and the Masons were talking about building the most beautiful temple in the world right near the new railway terminal. That kind of chatter around the shop worried his mother;

that would kill the viaduct traffic which came and went to the old West Bottoms Depot and out of which she got most of her transient trade; the distillers on Delaware might move up too, and the attorneys in the twenty-year-old buildings on Wyandotte would surely want to establish themselves in the new, high-class office buildings that would be put up between 12th and 15th.

These forebodings of hard times got into her bones and chilled her like a March night alley-wind, and if he was pestering her for pennies, then she would reply, while pushing off her pince-nez glasses, which she suddenly felt were making her perspire and nervous all over: "You know I've only got ten fingers, and I just make so much out of them. Do you think I find money in the streets; if I don't work, who'll help me?"

"But mother," he would say, "why don't you invest in real estate?"

He had heard some customers talk about big deals, real estate investments, and turn-overs. He caught fire by it all and repeated the words over and over again to himself. But she was not one to take any sort of chances which required long years of waiting; besides, she was always afraid that some schemer would get a lien on her shop and foreclose on her. She had struggled too hard, she said, for the little bread and butter she had.

Lorry spent a great deal of time with the boys in the street, playing on the Independence Avenue car tracks with the baker's boys and girls. Before he

went out his mother would usually tell him not to hop street cars or hitch on behind ice wagons and to keep away from Kornman the baker's boys. Once, on a Sunday morning before noon, as she had passed by on her way to the butcher's, she had seen the two Kornman boys sticking out their behinds and making noises with their mouths at the dry-goods store-keeper across the street. But Lorry liked to play run-sheep-run with the Independence Avenue kids at nights, and couldn't stay away; besides, he wanted friends very much and attached himself very quickly to anyone who seemed interested in him.

Lorry found many of his playmates among the children of his mother's help. Bud Taylor, son of the woman who worked for his mother, was his friend at times. He was older than Lorry, about twelve, had had experiences, and had smart, about-town ways which Lorry looked up to. He had dandy, regular features, wore blue serge knickers which were always neatly pressed, and had a certain air—the air boys take on when inhaling the smoke of a cigarette—that Lorry admired. Lorry never smoked because he had some sort of vague notion that it was immoral. Bud once told Lorry very confidentially that Tisha, daughter of a licensed woman who kept a house three doors from the shop, was in love with him, and that once she had asked him to drink some coffee in her house, but that he had refused, as he was dead sure she had put something in it to make him love her. Lorry listened with great deference and wished Tisha would drop some kind of a pill in his coffee.

Lorry knew Tisha, had often played drop-the-handkerchief with her and the other kids who lived upstairs in the back alley. For a while he thought of her and liked sticking around her and watching her mouth come out like the neck of a beer bottle when she was trying to say something heavy.

But one day, one guy, who wasn't afraid of a Dago and who drank bock beer out of his paw's tin pail, pushed Lorry up against her in a game of tag. Tisha blamed it on Lorry, told him to wear his glasses, and that he was cock-eyed anyway. Tisha was nobody's fool, and when it came to an argument, she knew how to curve a brick as well as any big-league pitcher. Well, the guy who had banged Lorry into Tisha was having the time of his life, and was saying things on the sly out of the corner of his mouth. He knew how to do a thing like that—just like one of those fellows, who sat on a camp chair under the viaduct, holding a punch-and-judy in his lap, which he pushed up and down to make it talk. Anyhow, Lorry couldn't remember what they called him, some sort of juggling name. But Tisha didn't get on to it and thought Lorry was trying to get her nanny goat; so all of a sudden she found a nice, smooth red brick which she hoisted at Lorry. That settled things for a while around the alley when that brick, rock is what Lorry said it was afterwards, mussed up the back of his head. There was an awful hush for a moment. When Lorry saw the blood on the palm of his hand and felt his head again to make sure, he let out a long, streaky howl; he thought he was killed, and wanted

everybody to know; he ran up to the 8th Street flat, climbed up the back-porch steps, and managed to pry open a window. He bathed his head and tried to make it right, so that his maw wouldn't get on.

He stayed in the flat for a couple of hours and pressed the blade of a tableknife up against the bump to flatten it down. He came back to the shop toward supper, when the light wasn't so good, but his maw noticed his bean looked sort of lopsided. She made him come out with the story, bathed his head in hot water all over again, and tried to tone down the bump with the blade of a tableknife. She told him not to play with a tough like Tisha, and the next morning, while emptying the garbage can in the alley, she gave Tisha's mother, who was going up the back steps to her house a piece of her mind. Tisha's mother said Lorry was only a street bum and that he was trying to lift up her daughter's dress. Tisha had been brought up better than that, and she wasn't going to have her ill-treated by a lady barber's boy.

For a long time after that, Lorry didn't see her; he spent most of his time with Emery on Admiral Boulevard or went down to Morris Stedna's house to ride in his wagon which was pulled by a donkey, his paw, Mawx Stedna, the hossdealer, had given him for a birthday present. But one evening when the 8th Street kids were at hide-and-go-seek under the viaduct, Tisha asked him to come on into the game. Later, she told him she had found out that it was the other guy and that she had handed him a whale

of a beating, and that she was sorry and hoped she hadn't hurt him too much. Lorry melted and said: "Naw, I wasn't really hurt; I was just scared stiff."

At night after supper, they would get together in the street under the fan-like flare of the electric lamp and choose up sides. As he was younger and smaller than the others, he was not always taken and would have to stand around and wait till some one got tired and dropped out or was called to get a can of beer or a quid of tobacco for his dad. In the autumn evenings, when sound, hard Missouri apples with a tang had been picked and could be bought at the Dago fruit stand on 8th and Walnut, and about the time when the electric floats, called the Priest of Palace Parade, were coming on, they would play run-sheep-run for all they were worth. This was the Indian summer of the year, when everybody was out for a stroll in the Paseo or just beginning to take in the movies again: Jenkins' Cigar Store was starting to open up again, after the dull summer months, and to sell raffle tickets for the latest model sedan; it was about the last time in the year Kansan Cityites could be seen in their b.v.d.s on the front porch eating ice cream out of a pasteboard box or hear the yells of the kids, the leader megaphoning through the hollow of his hands: "Bushel of wheat, bushel of rye, who's not ready holler I" and always some smart aleck would holler out "I" whether ready or not.

When Lorry got into the game of run-sheep-run he never quit until the kids had to go home because

their maws were screaming out of the windows after them and everything was busted up.

When things began to lag around 8th Street Lorry would run down to Admiral Boulevard and tag about with Emery. Emery had a weak, chalkwhite face, was very slow, but was easy to get along with, and Lorry would often run about the Boulevard with him and his gang when there was nothing else on in the evening.

Besides, he knew Admiral Boulevard; they had lived there in a room upstairs, back, in a rooming house when his mother was still a stranger in Kansas City. He used to like to go around there for old times' sake. He would hang around the shanty flat to see if Adelaide, the landlady's daughter, would drop down and say hello.

He was once gone on Adelaide, and gave her an orange. One night when his maw had gone out with a drummer for supper, he was sitting on the carpeted stairs crying, because he couldn't get the knot out of his shoelace. She came down, untied it for him, and sang to him: "Won't you come over to my house, won't you come over and play, I have a dolly, a dolly or two, I live just across the way. . . ." She was in high school then, had long coalblack hair, and the kind of skyblue eyes the talking machine in the Lyric Theater was singing about; and besides, a transient roomer had told her she ought to go on the stage. She could whistle too, and when he tried to pucker up his lips, she laughed at him, and told him that if

he ate lots of crackers first he could do it easily. He tried, but somehow or other couldn't get a sound out.

When the Priest of Palace Parade came on, Lorry peddled chewing gum and confetti to the crowds behind the ropes. There were cops on horses trotting up and down Walnut Street to keep the people near the curbs. The Priest of Palace Parade had been started by the Kansas City Railway and Traction Company. It was the big event of the year; it came around in the middle of Indian summer; a lot of transients came into town, and the Baltimore Hotel didn't have a room left; the haberdasheries, the barber shops and the shows made money to beat the band. Everybody said it was fine and dandy for business and kept money in circulation. The big companies in the West Bottoms and below Cliffs Drive were outdoing one another building electric floats; the papers were full of it; reporters were trying to get behind the locked doors of Loose Wiles and Lowney's Chocolate to see in advance the surprise floats. It got the holiday spirit in the air again, the old Teddy Roosevelt days; it kept spending up at a high pitch till the Missouri-Kansas football classic on Thanksgiving day. The Kansas City black-hands were out too, and the Dagos went in fours up and down Walnut on the night of the parade looking for boxes of gum and sacks of peanuts. While one Dago asked for a package of Wrigley's spearmint, another got down on his hands and knees behind the guy who was peddling, and while a third pushed

him over, a fourth picked up his goods and ran for all he was worth into the crowds.

Lorry usually stuck around a cop, and when he sold out, he would skip back to the shop, which was kept open late that night and give the money to his mother.

When Lorry was eleven he got to be an awful worry to his mother; she heard all sorts of stories about him from the girls as they came back from lunch. One said she saw him hitching on behind an ice wagon, and if he wasn't run over yet, it wasn't his fault; another said she noticed him hopping a Fairmount Park street car, as it turned around the corner at 8th and Walnut. When she heard these tales, she would get herself worked up so, that she couldn't cut a head of hair.

Old man Cromwell, a wealthy commission-house dealer and a city alderman for years advised her to send him to an orphanage in Cleveland. He knew how hard she worked for her piece of bread and butter, and always gave her a half dollar for a shave and said she was one hard-working respectable little lady, and that she didn't have to be ashamed to keep her head up anywhere.

By this time she had become a disappointed woman; life was a sour thing for her; she had no hopes—nothing except her boy who she believed had no chance as long as he ran the streets.

A few years back she could have married a retired major from the U.S. army; but she had not. He was very fond of her and most generous. When she first

opened up her shop, she didn't have any fine settee, nor well-oiled floor. He was stationed at that time, a bit prior to his retirement, at the Kansas City Recruiting Bureau, and used to come in often. She looked up to him, because he was so straight and polite, and never spoke loud. He always remembered her with some little thing, and never let a holiday go by without bringing her flowers or fruit. She always kept open on holidays until noon, and sometimes later if the cop didn't make her close; on the Fourth of July a furniture dealer stopped in front of her shop with a big van, took out the old, rickety camp chairs and replaced them with brand new mahogany ones without saying a how-de-doo as to where they came from. At first she thought some installment furniture house was playing a joke on her and ran out after him before he drove off; but he said, "It's all paid for, lady." But she was waiting, vaguely, she didn't know what for.

The major went off to Montana where he had an estate; the first Christmas he sent her a pocketbook with a fifty-dollar bill in it just for old times' sake. They corresponded for a while; and then she dropped it, and said what's the use. He finally married a woman he knew when he was at West Point.

Years ago she had left her husband, a fur operator in Brooklyn, who put his nose in his plate when he ate and never said boo, and run off with a barber from whom she had learned her present trade. He had a wife and three children somewhere, was sometimes a pimp, always a chippie-chaser. He was short,

had curly hair, wore studs in his shirt front, affected the dandy airs of a dude about town or from the big city, and was extremely cruel. They had gone off to Dallas together; but he always tilled the cash box at the end of the day and beat her and Lorry. He followed her wherever she went, was slick at getting clues as to her whereabouts, and finally traced her to Memphis. He managed to work some of her savings out of her; he beat her out of a diamond ring which she had bought when she was flush, to hold for a rainy day, and went off with some woman to San Diego.

The girls, too, who worked for her were a trial. They were easygoing young kids from Wichita, Kansas or St. Joseph, Missouri who wanted to learn a trade and become city flirts. They wanted to be fast and to know how to take care of themselves in a tough town. She took them in, taught them the trade, lent them money when they were down on their backs, and when they got on their feet again they'd primp up, run off with some well-perfumed guy who took dope or take a job in a competitive shop across the street, because they thought it was closer to Walnut Street.

She and Lorry lived in a flat on 8th Street, between Cherry and Holmes, which was once decent enough and middle-class but which in the last few years had run down and gotten a tough reputation. A lot of three-story brick hotels had been built up around it where stick-up men and sporting women hung around. The higher-class broads, who lounged about

the lobbies of fairly expensive hotels which attracted out-of-town drummers, had moved up toward 11th around the fashionable dyeing and cleaning shops and near the refined and solid-appearing public library.

But 8th Street was convenient for her, only a few blocks away from the shop, and right on the Fairmount Park line, so that if she wanted a little recreation on Sunday afternoons, when the air was refreshing, she could get the street car almost at her doorstep. Besides, she got up a little later in the mornings to open the shop; she couldn't leave the flat as early as she once did and keep the long hours she did at work. She liked taking her time, having a cold sponge bath every morning (she felt that was the only thing that kept her going) and walking along to the shop, peeling an orange, or breaking with thumb and finger of one hand an apple while she held the bag in the other.

In the evenings she was usually alone; Lorry was in the streets or hanging around the corner drug store, while the girls, who roomed with her, were either out or locked in their rooms with their steadies. She pottered about the house; when she had to get her laundry ready for the washerwoman she was up till two in the morning. She never threw anything away; and it took her hours to gather together and count pieces of material that were in the pantry or in her trunk, and which she kept because they were old and she had lived with them so long. A petticoat she never parted with, for when it became

so ragged that she could no longer wear it, she then stripped it into oblong pieces and had it laundered for dishtowels. Or if fruit was in season she stayed up making preserves and jarring them till way into the small hours before dawn. She was extremely slow and unmethodical and never seemed to get anything done about the house.

Sometimes, when she was blue, she played the piano, missing the correct notes, going over and over them again, with a sort of determined anguish. She had not had lessons since she was a girl, but looked upon her mahogany upright piano as one of the refined left-overs in her life. Her voice had a sweet quaver, and when she sang: "Way down upon the Swanee River," or "Tell me one thing, tell me true, dear, tell me why you went away," she felt far from everything, recalling something she had never had or still longed for, vaguely, indistinctly. If the evening was mild, and she had washed her hair, she would sit on the steps of the back porch and retouch the parts which were becoming very gray. She would breathe deeply and rest her head back against the latticed porch railing in a sort of dream-daze. She had to keep up appearances on account of the shop.

CHAPTER II

UNDERNEATH THE 8TH STREET VIADUCT

Sometimes drummers, jolly fellows and good sports, came in from Cleveland or Pittsburgh, and Lizzie went out with them once in an age to a restaurant or a show. She didn't care for the movies, but liked, as she said, serious drama. Nor did she believe in spending hard-earned money on restaurant food.

Once, much against the will of the drummer, she took Lorry along with them to see "Beverly of Graustark," as he kept pestering and saying that he didn't want to be left alone in the flat. She told him that he wouldn't care for plain talking drama, as there was no singing or dancing in it. They were shown their seats by a uniformed usher, which impressed him very much. He was very quiet and intent, his eyes upon the orchestra which struck up a lively tune and concluded with "Dreams of Love" before the curtain rose. After the asbestos went up, there was another drop behind it with a photograph of the wealthy country club district on it, with well-pruned and surgoned trees and squares of lawns, such as he had often seen out of the street car window going out to Swope Park. The costumes, the speeches, the love-making, the theater footlights which recalled the aristocratic-looking sidewalk lamps outside the high-

tone Willis Woods Theater—all that dimmed the shop, the plug-besmeared cuspidors, the rusty gas range, the ugly flies on the soiled plaster wall, the alley, the 8th Street flat with its bits of rugs strewn over one another like dead moths. She was pleased and said to the drummer, "You know, Lorry never once took his eyes off the stage."

On holidays, when there was no school, Lorry would carry the basket of provisions for his mother and go down to the shop with her. There was seldom much business in the mornings, except early eight o'clock customers who came in for a rush shave before getting on to the office; and Lorry usually whiled away the time talking to the girls or pestering them for a manicure. He liked chatting with Mary, because she was neat as a pin and not as loud as the others. Mary was a steady worker. His mother always said you could count on her. She was Catholic, severely plain in her dress, wore a white shirt-waist with a ruffled collar that gathered high about the neck, a black cloth skirt that fell about her ankles, and high black topshoes, and did not cut up with the trade. Mary's customers had tried to become friendly and get next to her, but she treated them all alike with a studied politeness and affable coolness.

For fifteen years a suitor had been courting her. He was a small man, with wilted blue eyes and sandy hair, was very correct, carried a heavy cane with gloves, and never called on Mary on Good Fridays. Mary rented a room from his mother at the 8th Street flat and once a week on Sundays, punctiliously at six

in the evening, the door bell rang, and he could be seen noiselessly mounting the stairs, reaching the top, and ceremoniously bowing. He always did the expected, like a man sitting in an orchestra seat between his intended mother-in-law and his fiancée. She would ask him in, making certain to keep the door wide-open; he would sit down stiffly, his two legs and knees like T squares standing on end. Then they would go out for supper, and often in the middle of an after-coffee chat, he would take out his twenty-two movement Elgin to tell the time to be certain that she was inside her room at nine-thirty sharp. His mother, who often walked by the hall on her way to the kitchen, when he was ready to leave, liked to put in a good evening to him, because he spoke nicely with his lips and said she was looking well. Many times she did not hear him go out, and she would say, "He's as quiet as a mouse."

When Mary was out for lunch and business was dull, the girls put in their say about Mary and her beau who came in regularly every Thursday for a feather-edged haircut. They wondered why she held him off so long. Mrs. Bridgeford, who was married to an old screw who ran a barber college on lower Main Street and had a twelve-year-old girl, Ghizella, who knew things, said she ought to marry him or drop him and that it was imposing on a fellow's good nature to string him along that way for fifteen years. Mrs. Harney, a tall and large-boned woman, with peroxide-red hair, a weak heart and a troublesome appendix, said he was no find and that anyway a

woman had to watch out for herself first. Laura Moneysmith, who worked at the third chair and was still pretty, smiled. She was from Salt Lake City and was separated from her Mormon husband. She gadded about a great deal with men, and as his mother said, she never worried where her next day's bread-and-butter was coming from.

Lorry often played checkers with Laura and watched her goings-on with rounders at the 8th Street flat. She occupied the back room and was always having some one in. For a time she had been going with a flat-iron salesman who used to tell Lorry about Indian reservations in Oklahoma. Once she told Lorry's mother on him, and he paid her back by climbing up on the knob of the door, looking through the transom and watching the flat-iron salesman kiss her. She caught him at it, threw open the door, and chased him crazily all through the house from one room to the other. Lorry leaped over beds, banged pillows at her, and made faces. She was all worked up about it, and reported him to his mother who roared with laughter. But Laura Moneysmith didn't take it that way and told his mother that if she didn't whip that onery kid of hers, she would quit and that anyhow he would be walking all over her pretty soon if she didn't give him a little of the old hickory. His mother compromised; it was too hard to get decent help. Laura, for all her gadding, was a dandy little lady barber and she knew how to work the trade.

She pulled Lorry's ears and made him get a book.

"Aw mother," he complained, "I know my lessons," but she locked him up in the front room. Lorry took on for a bit, said "yo-ho-ho" at the top of his voice, kicked the door, and when no one opened it, he got sulky, slipped out of the alcove porch window, slid down the post, and went off to Admiral Boulevard to fool around with Emery and some Charlotte Street nigger kids and didn't get back till after twelve at night after which he got the razor strop. The next day he wouldn't look at his mother or touch his food.

"Why don't you eat your soup?" she said, sampling it with a large spoon. "It's just like a wine."

He got up from the table and went off. She called him back, making an imperious gesture, but he paid no attention to her; then as she heard the door slam behind her, her mouth fell, and she cried, wiping her eyes, strained and bloodshot from the electric-bulb glare, on a soiled haircloth. Whenever she wept, she felt that her eyes were burning out; they seemed like coal fires in the sockets of her head. This would make her weep again with self-pity and she would say to herself: "It's following them haircutting scissors; Dr. Henry told me I got to have a rest and keep off my feet for a while"; so she would ramble on seeking surcease and rationalizing herself out of her misery, "perhaps God'll help me." Then she would say to a girl coming backshop, "Well, it's no disgrace to be poor, but it's awfully inconvenient."

Later near evening, when Bud was getting primped up by his mother to take in the Subway Theater,

across the street from the head of the viaduct, to see Pearl White and Antonio Moreno in a serial, he came around peevishly and asked her for a nickel for the movies. She gave him the nickel and another one besides for an apple, and kissed him. "But remember," she said, feeling that he needed a little talking to before giving in to him, "no candy and no loafing the streets afterwards."

"You bet your boots, mother," he called back, skipping out to catch up with Bud.

For a week Lorry was an angel; that was a record for him, but after that he was worse than ever, and his mother shook her head, "He's got one of his mean spells again."

On Sundays his mother slept till twelve or one o'clock in the afternoon. Her bones ached her all over; her eyes, she said, jumped before her. She told Lorry sometimes if he pressed her too much for money: "Before I make a dime I see stars before my eyes." She scarcely ever left the shop on Saturdays, or rather on Sundays till two in the morning. Sunday was a bad day for Lorry; all morning he fidgeted hoping his mother would put on her kimono and get him some French fried toast and cocoa for breakfast; and when she didn't he crawled out of bed in the alcove, turned on the hot water, took a bath, and wasted time dressing. Then if she was still sleeping, he ran down to the corner grocery store and bought a box of Kellogg's corn flakes, a small pitcher of cream, as the cream off the top of Missouri dairy bottle milk was thin, a package of Mama's crispy

cookies, and three bananas. After a big bowl of corn flakes with bananas and cream, he stuck some Mama's cookies in his side pocket, munched them, while scouting around the house or in the clothes closets emptying them of old shoes and rags, kicking aside jars of watermelon rind preserves, looking for his rubber ball.

On the back porch he made up for himself some kind of baseball game, which he ran out into innings, as he bounced it against the brick wall between the window next to Laura's room and the kitchen door. Laura Moneysmith always kept her blinds down all the way, and if he couldn't get a rise out of her by banging the ball against the summer-screen, he went back to the alcove bedroom, and asked his mother what she needed from the butcher and the bakery. He knew it had to be done, and he was anxious to get it over with. But she was on to Lorry's tricks and wouldn't let him go off till he helped her with the house dusting.

She had to go over the carpets and steps after him, but it was a saving of strength for her; she couldn't afford to have a housekeeper by the hour; she had to get down on her hands and knees to push the broom over the steps at the lower end of the wooden handle so that the weight of it wouldn't be a drag on her. The doctor had told her not to lift. Getting corners of dust into the dustpan that Lorry had swept there wasn't such a strain on her. But to get him to air the carpets on the back-porch latticed fence, shoo a rag over the rack of postcards, among which were a pic-

ture of the major, scenic views of Swope Park, the Armory, the Union Depot, Christmas cards from girls who had gone to Omaha, Tulsa, and Seattle,—the years in them,—sallow and gone-looking like an old parchment shade, put furniture polish on the mahogany piano, was more aggravation, she often told him, than his whole help was worth. It was a relief then to have him out of the house; and he killed no time running out, unless Laura, loosely kimonoed, was up and on her way to the bathroom.

When Lorry was gone she took her cold sponge bath and then pared her corns with a razor. Every Sunday morning after her bath, she laid a large turkish towel over the bed and sitting on it, her pince-nez glasses constantly falling off and steaming in her eyes, as she bent over to see, she performed this ritual; otherwise, she said, she could not stand on her feet. Then if Laura was in the kitchen, heating her curling irons over the stove, she asked her to take a bite of something with her for breakfast.

Lorry liked sliding through the butcher-shop sawdust and leaning over the pickle barrels to get the smell of them in his nose. As the butcher had to close up before Sunday noon, there were always a lot of people standing about to get waited on. The butcher carried a grocer's line also, so that Lorry could do almost all of his shopping there. If they had hard, green apples speckled with dots of red, sour pickles, and a rib-steak, first cut, he shopped with much satisfaction. If Lorry was well-dressed in his Sunday blue serge suit, he handed over his bags of pur-

chases to the butcher's delivery boy to take up to the flat in the buggy, and went up Independence Avenue to call on a girl friend who lived across the street from Fountain Place.

He had known Muriel for three years and the other kids who lived on the block said that she was his best girl. When he got in sight of the house, he slowed down, and if Muriel was sitting on the front porch, he sometimes passed up the house as though he was on his way to the Paseo, and if she didn't call him, he went on and dropped back an hour later. If no one was out on the porch, he hopped up the steps, rang the bell, and asked for the old man who was usually not in. If Muriel was in the back yard playing hopscotch with her brothers in front of the shanty livery stable, and said, "Hello, Lorry," in an offhand manner, he took on an adult air and whistled a high-tone tune from some music he had heard at the Lyric Theater on the graphophone during the showing of still slides. Putting one shined shoe on the axle of an unhitched, desolate-looking buggy, in the back yard, he thought of the refrigerating pipes inside the Missouri Dairy Company, which he had seen one Saturday morning, when the milkman, coming out of the Elks' Club at 7th and Grand Avenue, had given him a lift back to the plant; but as they hadn't even gone out to the city limits, it wasn't anything extra. Bud lived in a court on the bluffs; Lorry often went down there and stayed till night; they used to light out to a vacant lot and make a bonfire; and he remembered how he counted the red

lanterns behind the cabooses, which he made out through the smoke that got back in his throat. All those tracks down there in the yards, like some hard boy-scout knot, made him moody, and a wagon wheel standing up in back of the livery stable made him think of the queerness of some words he had seen printed on a postcard in the penny arcade and shooting gallery on Main Street. He had never been able to figure them out, but they always seemed to strangely bother him, and some mornings, when he had had a bad day, and his mother had told him he had gotten up on the wrong side of the bed, that postal-card greeting which was on a swinging rack in front of the wax fortune teller inside a glass coffin-like case, and which his eyes kept fumbling over while some fool in back of the penny arcade was shooting dead cartridges at moving toy white ducks, had so upset him that his mind seemed to have gone blank on him. He couldn't remember anything for a time, and he felt as he did sometimes, when he took in the Lyric moving picture show in the afternoons, and all of the seats were practically vacant, and suddenly the graphophone stopped playing, "Love me and the world is mine," and the colored still slides went off the white curtain. Then dropping the words that puzzled him out of his mind, "A rolling stone gathers no moss," he looked at Muriel's petticoat, which peeped out an inch as she stooped over, with furtive curiosity. He had never thought before of girls' underclothes.

Later, Muriel went into the house, put on a white

dress, with a pink ribbon as a side sash, and if the front garden was in bloom, she picked a violet and stuck it in her hair. Then she sauntered out to the front porch, where Lorry was sitting on a straight chair leaning back against the brick wall. Then he took her in out of the corners of his eyes, but not directly, as he did not want her to get stuck up with him. She looked real swell and he felt she knew it, and because he felt that, and didn't want her to take on airs with him, he didn't notice her after Rosalie came over.

Rosalie lived across the street at Fountain Place and took toe-dancing lessons and said she expected to go on the stage some day, which shocked Muriel and made her brothers smirk and look wise at one another.

Muriel got quieter and looked cross; her brothers asked Rosalie to whirl and do her toe-dance; she wouldn't at first, but they pushed her through the door and into the front parlor; and Rosalie, pink-warm and nervous, told Muriel to play a serious piece on the upright piano in the hall.

Muriel, who didn't care much about watching Rosalie whirl and stand on her toes, opened the piano and played Mendelssohn's "Spring Song." When she pointed her toes and fluffed her arms against the floating parlor dust, Lorry almost got keen on her; when she wasn't talking, she was stagey, and he liked her.

Muriel's brothers came over next to Lorry, and when Rosalie bent her head far back, showing the

lace fringe on her pants, one of the brothers put out his foot and tripped her up, while the other one pushed Lorry on her as she fell. Rosalie got all worked up about it, said that Lorry was raised in the streets and that she ought to have known better than to have talked to a lady barber's boy.

Lorry was tongue-tied, and sat there; he wanted to get up and go, but didn't know how to break away.

Muriel, trying to be smart and anxious to get back into the limelight, handed him his cap, and told him to please shut the door from the outside.

When he came home, his mother called him down for being late.

Sometimes on Sunday evenings after a light bite of cornbeef and dill pickles, and a glass of tea, they went out for a street car ride to Swope Park. Once in a while, his mother went to Fairmount Park to please Lorry, as there was a merry-go-round, a scenic railway, and an outdoor dance pavilion, where Lorry liked to go and watch; but as the gate admission was ten cents a person, and he was getting too big to get in for nothing, she rarely ever went there any more. Amusement parks were too rackety for her; she had enough of that during week days, and wanted to relax, sit easily on a quiet park bench, and take in the country air.

She often said to him, when he got nervous and slouched, "Lorry, you should breathe deeply, like this"; she demonstrated doing breathing exercises that she went through in the mornings after her cold sponge, "it's very good for your lungs, gets all the

impurities out, and it'll make you straight. You stoop over like an old man already. You've got to keep your head back; if you don't you'll be round-shouldered just like that dirty pup, my brother. If he had put out a few dollars for me, but he always had the cream of everything from the old folks, and a little education, I could be a piano teacher and not have to slave as a chin-scraper."

Lorry was frightened and threw his shoulders back and asked his mother if he was round-shouldered.

But usually before his mother had dressed, done and redone her hair, fixed her petticoat so that it did not show—Lorry always watched out for that and reminded her, "Mother, your petticoat is showing again"—he was so high-strung that he openly quarrelled with her. At times she passed it over, excused him to herself, saying he was a nervous and delicate child, and went on looking for her hairpins and pocketbook; but again she was upset; her inability to lay her hands on her glasses and the upbraiding Lorry was giving her so aggravated her, that she wouldn't budge from the house for the rest of the evening.

She sat on the piano stool, looked for pieces of sheet music which she had no intention of playing, and lamented the little pleasure she got out of life. Lorry, seeing how cut up she was, tried to get around her; he petted her hair, and fooled with her chin tickling it, as though with a dandelion, and asked her whether she liked butter until she gave in with a "get away, you smarty; you don't love your mother."

"You bet your boots I do," he laughed, and took her out by the hand.

But Lorry couldn't wait any more; he was just like a wild Injun, she said. He wanted to get on the street car and get a seat next to the window. When she got off the sidewalk, she was so hesitant and on edge if she heard a rumbling wagon or a street car clanging a block off that Lorry had to take her hand and pull her along, and before she was on the street car platform, they often had words again.

He liked any kind of a ride, and often got an old newspaper out of the barber shop, stuck it under his arm, and jumped on a depot car going over the viaduct, and through the tunnel, and went up and down the aisle as a newsie, calling, "*Kansas City Star*." Once a fellow bought the *Star*, and as he hadn't looked to see whether it was the latest edition or old enough for his mother's wrapping paper, he was scared stiff, and as the viaduct didn't end till Wyandotte, he thought he was sure in for the reformatory.

Later, the monotony and daily routine of the barber shop was somewhat broken up. His mother became interested in a fellow from Louisville, Kentucky, who was a captain of an excursion boat plying on the Missouri River between Kansas City and St. Louis. He happened in late one blue Monday evening, when she was alone, and had just finished counting the soiled towels and haircloths for the laundry and pouring fresh water into the spittoons.

"Too late?" he asked opening the door.

"No, never too late," she replied, a little gurgling laugh in her throat, "we're always here for business. It's your next."

He gave her a big job. She didn't mind working on him, because he was a good joshier and had gentlemanly manners. After he had gotten out of the chair, put on his collar, and made a bow-tie, he sauntered over to the front show case and looked through the glass at some cigars. She carefully put the scissors away, laid her hone aside, and wrapped up her tools as though she was performing a ritual, and put them into a drawer which she locked.

"Be with you in a minute, sir," she called out to him, as she went into the back room to wash the sweat from her face and wipe her pince-nez glasses.

"Oh, that's all right, little lady, take your time. I'm in no hurry."

Then she went up front, rang up the sale, and picking up the dice box, smiled, "Shall I shake you for a cigar?"

He won the first two throws, and then couldn't get a lucky break for the next six games. He examined the dice joshingly, and kept looking back up at her. She couldn't hold herself in, and had to get a barber towel from a chair to wipe the tears from her eyes.

He was amused, looked her over, as he bent down to pick up a couple of dice that had rolled on the floor: "Lady, what's the matter with these bones, are they loaded?"

After that they strolled up 8th Street and dropped

into the Owl Drug Store for an ice-cream soda, and then she thanked him and went home alone, asking him to call again. He said he was a steamboat man and probably couldn't get around for a couple of weeks, but that he would drop in all right.

After a week in St. Louis he returned; he had been thinking of her. "Winning a few dimes and having a soda with a fellow suited her to a T, and then she didn't go in for beads and jewelry and all that nonsense."

Henry Smith was from Kentucky, from the blue-grass country as he proudly said, had southern ways and easy-going manners. He had knocked about a lot, liked a good time, and had before been a first mate in and around New Orleans. He was almost thirty-six then and felt that he wanted to settle down with some woman who knew how to put a little aside and live on less than a man made. He was tired of running around with skirts; he hadn't bummed about New Orleans for nothing, and was a bit fed up throwing his kale around on fast women. He had also played small-time vaudeville, comedy gags, jigging, clever stage talk, with a cute little gal from Atlanta. She was a pretty little trick, and he was quite gone on her at first; she had dash, knew how to wear clothes, was a real stepper; but she was always wanting expensive things, lots of slippers and silk stockings, and when he had once balked she told him right out that he was stingier than a close shave. After that squabble Henry Smith decided it was better that each should go his own way. She carried

on a little, acted all cut up, cried a dab; but he was that way, he told her; once his mind was made up, he had to stick to it.

One night Henry told Lorry's mother that he was stuck on her, but she said he was only trying to mash and that he was a big joshier; she could tell that from the very first day she saw him. However, she was pleased. She liked him; he was good company; he could dance, sing, play the piano, or mandolin in a light, comical manner, or baritone "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep," in a serious, vaudeville way that sent her completely off, and upset her pince-nez glasses from her crinkled nose.

"Yes," she told Laura Moneysmith who had been kidding her, "he's so jolly you just can't be mad at him."

The girls in the shop said they would make a dandy match, just her size, short, blond, blue eyes, full of old Harry in 'em, a little fat around the waistline, but then one couldn't have everything.

Henry came up to the 8th Street flat often, and Lorry liked to pest around with him whenever he was at the piano. He had got the habit from somebody, his mother said, of leaning on people. Henry was short, fat, and got all sweaty when Lorry had his hands and elbows on his fleshy shoulders. Besides, one evening Lorry made a nuisance of himself, when Henry was kissing his mother, and Henry after that said the kid was too forward.

Marriage was a rather vague thing in their minds. Henry never mentioned 'it and she never prodded

him about it, but let him go on in his own easy-going way. He said he wanted to put some money away, get out of the steamboat line and open up a garage. He was an A number one mechanic, had made some clever inventions—a footbell for a street-car conductor, that was before some one had come along and patented it—but he had never had the initiative to go ahead with them and she didn't have the strength to push him along.

They went on in this way, now and then cutting through the daily rounds with a supper and a good bottle of beer on board the excursion boat of which he was the captain. The officers and men were very polite and well-mannered to her, and she knew how to enjoy a porterhouse steak and a stein of bock with good company.

CHAPTER III

THE NEWCUMBER

Lorry went off to the orphanage.

Henry felt relieved. The kid probably would be out of the way at least for three or four years. Besides, he thought, it would be a bit of good discipline for him; he had to sooner or later learn how to chalk the line.

The Union Depot—the first sight of Cleveland—was worse than Kansas City's old stable railway shanty. It reminded him of the barber shop his mother used to have on 7th, and which hadn't been torn down yet; but, anyway, 7th Street had been played out ages ago. When Lorry got on a street car at Superior Avenue, he knew then for sure he was in a real city. There were three rows of car tracks on the Avenue. In Kansas City, in the busiest downtown sections, there were never more than two.

Miss W., the orphanage wardrobe matron, a Scotch woman, who never had any time for nonsense, met him at the railway station. She saw right away that he wasn't going to be any benefit to the orphan asylum, as he stumbled trying to get on the car, and kept looking out of the window as though his time for looking was about up. Lorry kept watching the blue enamelled tin plates nailed to the telegraph poles that went by, trying to catch the number of the streets on them. The streets were wide enough,

it seemed to him, for ten wagonloads of hay, and there were fine-looking maples on either side, which looked as though they might have some strong syrup in them. His quietness got on her nerves, and she told him that Cleveland was called the Forest City. She had lived in Cleveland ever since she could remember and said she thought the September leaves, Wade Park, Shaker Heights, Euclid Beach, the Lake Erie air, beat Niagara Falls all hollow. Those were fine names he thought, and he leaned way out of the window to get some of that keen-edged Lake Erie air brushing through the maples.

He got in about ten o'clock. The inmates had been in bed for two hours. In the little kids' dormitory one couldn't hear a pin fall. It was Friday night. Miss W. and Lorry climbed three flights of stairs to the little kids' dormitory and went into Miss Price's room to get a bite and a number. Miss Price took care of the little orphans, and saw to it that rubber sheets were put on the beds of those who wet themselves or who looked like they were the kind. She was a pretty fair judge, and as soon as a newcomer got in, she said, she could tell for certain whether he was a little pisser or not. As Lorry was too big to be put for long in her dormitory, she took a chance and gave him a glass of milk, although it was way past bedtime, and a piece of coffee cake. He hardly touched the milk which he thought was more watery than Missouri Dairy grade B cow juice; anyway that was what Henry always called it. Miss W. gave him his wardrobe number; the last boy who had had

number 92 had died of spinal meningitis, she told him, but he was a great help to her and she had made him assistant head wardrobe boy. Lorry, who hadn't said much up till then, asked her if she didn't have another vacant number for him.

The next morning the superintendent, who was called Doc by the orphans, gave him a little talking to, asked him what his number was, and told him what the rules were, and that if 92 wanted to be a model boy, not run out in the city, or down the back gully, he would some day be confirmed and get a prayer book with his name printed in gold letters on it. Otherwise, he would have to expel him and send him back to Kansas City in disgrace.

That evening he was assigned a single cot downstairs in the older boys' dormitory, as he was nearly twelve, and given a certain place at a table in the dining room, where five hundred boys and girls came three times a day for mess. The girls sat on one side of the hall and the boys on the other. The orphans ranged in age from four to seventeen. The tables were long and narrow, like a signpainter's plank stretched between two ladders. They were about twenty-five feet in length, covering the entire width of the hall. The older guys, who knew something about the outside life, city life as they called it, said they were convict tables.

The grounds all told were as large as a big-league ball park. It was all fenced around, except the back gully, to keep the fellows from running out. In front there was a spokey, steel fence, which set off the

lawn, in the middle of which there was a water fountain that only played in the summer months, if the kids didn't tamper with it, and put stones and burrs down its throat. As a matter of fact, the orphans weren't allowed on the front lawn, except on first picnic, and two or three other days, which came once a year. On the left side of the grounds there was a nine-foot wooden fence, which faced people's wooden frame houses on one side and a hot house and a kohlrabi and carrot patch on the other. On Wednesdays, when the fellows had had a goulashy stew, which the lousy cook, Christine, had done for them, they said, because the day before, she had cut her finger on a can getting up a tomato soup, they ducked into the garden patch to make a little haul.

There was a four-story brick schoolhouse, in the attic of which there was the prayer hall, which was like rat poison to the bigger guys. Opposite the schoolhouse was the main building; on one side was the gals' dormitory, on the other the kids'; in the basement were the playrooms, one at each end of the building. On the first floor was the marble hall, where they had slabs of marble that had streaks of blue in them that looked like varicose veins. They were memorials for dead trustees and rich merchants, who had their names chiselled in gold on them, and who had donated for the upkeep of the asylum anywhere from a hundred bucks up. Opposite the marble slabs was Doc's office, which the guys weren't so hot about, as Doc knew a thing or two about

wading in, side-stepping, feinting, and rabbit punches. He was getting on in years, had a bad heart which had been killing him for fifteen years, but which he seemed to completely forget about when he had a line-up of guys who had run out into the city, and for whom he was warming up with quick left jabs, which increased in momentum, when he got to referring to the mosaic laws as a stand-by for all orphans. At least, that's how the guys made it out; anyhow, they kept out of the marble hall as much as possible.

On the kids' side of the building was the dining hall; around the corner from it was the wardrobe, which was under the supervision of Miss W., who knew her own mind, and whose temper was oftener than not as strong as Scotch whiskey. Opposite the main building was the kitchen over which Christine dominated; next to it was the bread room, which the older guys were always trying to break into for apples and crusts of bread, with barrel molasses thinly scraped over them. There were two hospitals, one for general sicknesses, which was well patronized by guys on Sunday mornings an hour or so before prayer-hall time, and the other for the mumps and other contagious diseases, which no one went in for except nutty guys or a fellow who was about to be expelled by Doc, and who tried to get in there, as a sort of lying-in, until the wind had blown over.

The kids and gals rose in the morning at 5.45 a.m. There were three to four governors who took care of about three hundred fellows, and two governesses

who managed the quieter gals. There were monitors also who had charge of groups at the table and in the playroom. They were older guys from the seventh grade and up, who were dandy ball players or extra good in the schoolhouse. The governors were strict about kids crawling out of bed when their whistles blew, "all up now." There were five rows of beds in the bigger kids' dormitory, and there were two monitors who helped out. Only simple guys who were good in the schoolhouse seemed to care about getting up right away; seventh graders, who fooled around at manual training, and got through the transom of the bread room at night, weren't crazy about airing their bare buttocks on January mornings at 5.45 a.m., and raised old harry, when a monitor, who thought he was too much anyway, came along, shooed off the blanket, turned the cot upside down, and then in the bargain went back to report him to the governor for mulishness. The guys had another name for them monitors who were bed-dumpers.

The orphans were called by rows to the washroom in which there was a long, narrow trough on either side with some twenty faucets which shot ice cold water into the cement bottom. There were rectangular cakes of Ivory soap in each plate and numbered toothbrushes adjacent to them. The kids filed in, their young bodies stripped to the waist, the sleeves of their woolen underwear hanging, and splashed their faces, necks, ears, and hands in an ice cold douche that came out swift as water from a fire pump. Then they dug the bristles of their tooth-

brushes into the Ivory cakes and scrubbed their teeth.

When each fellow had made up his own bed, dressed, combed his hair and been inspected by the governor, they marched down double file to the basement playroom and shined their shoes. Each kid had a dauber and a brush. He spat on the black hair of the dauber which he dug into a community box of shoe polish; and if a guy was nearsighted, and stuck his nose down to the dauber to be sure he got the spit on the dauber and not on his shirt, Hans, if he was around, pushed the rest of his face into it. They smeared the polish and white plug of spit on the tops, sides, and heels of their shoes, and brushed them.

At 6.20 a.m. the governor's whistle blew: "All quiet now!" and the kids took their places and folded their hands and didn't sprawl. They sat on long narrow wooden benches inside of which were kept the brushes and daubers and the outside of which had been all cut up with initials by pocket-knives by kids who wanted to be remembered after they had been confirmed and left the orphanage. An eighth grader recited the morning prayer.

At 6.40 a.m. they marched up the stairs to the dining room. From that time on the day was really started, and Miss W.'s mouth could be heard racketing through the hallway and some assistant wardrobe boy seen dashing around the corner toward the dining room banging into the line or hitting up against a governor, trying to dodge a clothesbrush

coming that way. Once Miss W., shooting a ball of twine at Watermelonhead for losing one of his black elastic garters, clipped Mr. G., the governor, at the point of his architectural nose, and they had a falling out that lasted two years. Whether Mr. G. had established a precedent or not, it was known that when a kindergartner or an eighth grader told another kid to tell the kid he wasn't talkin' to any more that he "was angry at him," it was no spoofin'. He meant it. Some of the older kids had said that when Herman Mush Tate, the champeen arguifier and word-thrower of the home, had gotten angry at Nuts Becker, because the latter had swiped two Washington pies out of his box one night, Mush Tate wouldn't give in when they thought Becker was dying of pneumonia. Mush Tate said it was a point of honor with him; they had been in "whack" with each other, divvied up marbles, shoelaces, and stale doughnuts they had crooked from Becker's Bakery; and that guy, who was called Nuts Becker, because he was nuts about Becker's stale cakes, had turned state's evidence or something; anyway, Mush Tate had a line when it came to talking himself up, and he wouldn't nohow have words with him if he handed him Doc's overalls and Christine's drawers together. Nohow, Mush Tate never went so far as to say that Nuts Becker had outright swiped two Washington pies from him, as there was a fluke in his own case, since Nuts Becker, although he didn't say so, somebody else got the story round that Mush Tate had gotten his mits into Prunes' box in the playroom,

where a whole tray of pies that must have been made in Dawe's Bakeshop, was lying.

Two girls, dining-room help, opened the doors leading into the hall and the boys marched into their seats, the kindergartners going first, and the eighth graders last. A short prayer was done and then started the scraping of chairs, plates, tin plates enamelled white, tin spoons or the yell of some fellow in a corner: "Hey, you crook, don't go changing mush plates with me! Want a sock in the eye!" For breakfast they got a tin plate of oatmeal, they called it mush, without cream, milk or sugar. The kids poured their coffee into it to make it moist. Two slices of bread, one with butter thinly brushed over it and another without butter, usually the end crust of the loaf. Rye bread was always served, and never white, except once when the orphanage physician ordered a change of diet, as a great deal of spinal meningitis had been going around at the time. There were no extra portions or doles served except sometimes on Thursdays, when the kitchen servants came around with tin pans of green-pea hash, which nobody would eat except nuts like Prunes or Mush Tate who, Shrimp always said to the day he was confirmed, were sappy enough to put anything into their dumb mouths the kitchen gave them. The kids didn't waste any time, although Bonehead-Star-Wolfe, who came from Hamilton, Ohio, and wasn't a general, couldn't see what their hurry was; even Shrimp and Spunk had to admit that was something from Wolfe who never had anything in his head but

mick's holes. Most of the fourteen carat solid gold scraps got worked up and planned in the dining room; after they were done eatin' what there was to eat, they took to gabbing about schoolhouse teachers, governors, athletics, first picnic, how many days more for confirmation, and whether Werner, the gardner, who ran a nag hitched to a triangle sled to move the snow off the grounds, was ever the kaiser's body-guard.

The superintendent of the home—the boys always referred to the institution as the home—had been there for thirty-five years. He was orthodox in his notions about bringing up children, but the kids all thought he had a good heart, and the gals were always trying to get next to him, and as the guys would put it, those snotty gals were always wanting to suck around somebody. That's why they got such good marks in the schoolhouse and were marked down with so few demerits that they went to first and second picnics and received besides the yearly two dollars for being good. Some fellows had it that the trustees couldn't afford to be handing out two dollars to every orphan just because he was human, so they got together in the trustees' meeting room and decided to be stricter on the boys' side so there would be enough kale to go round. Anyway, that was how Prunes who never had gotten more than a half dollar out of the orphanage treasury, put it.

The former inmates—those who had been confirmed and gone out into the city were called that—had created a certain halo and romantic tradition

around Doc. The kindergartners and the kids up to the third grade thought he was God in disguise, because he had a white beard and had dandy meals in a private apartment next to the marble hall; the eighth graders, although they had a healthy respect for his wicked right, said he was human after all, because he picked his nose. But those who knew their hymns, and remembered that "the Lord's ways were many" were in doubt; especially those who had been in the marble hall line-ups for running out to the city. All the memorial slabs were there and all the funeral prayers took place there, and everybody said it was no place for an orphan, half or whole. Doc lined up the mischief-makers, who didn't know rules from spittin' daubers, admonished a lad to the left, gave a fellow at the right an old man's Bible talkin' to, and clouted a kid standing right up in the middle of the line. He wasn't for overstraining himself, the kids saw that; he was getting on in years and couldn't take the trouble reaching out. His many ways were awfully hard on the kids who almost did it in their pants waitin'; they just couldn't stand the pause; no one ever knew who would be next; not even the eighth grader who had said the morning prayers. It was too tantalizing; the fellows were sure jerky and nervous, and fell down before they were hit, or had their hands around their chins affecting to run over with interest the young peachdown on those parts.

One guy, who was dead gone on religion for a while, had once somehow or other got himself mixed up in that marble slab memorial line of scallawags.

Doc was in awful fine trim that day and all ready for a real workout. His heart hadn't been bothering him for a week. Well, the boys were kinda shaky, why shouldn't they be, and this here guy in particular got himself worked up into a high chapel fervor pitch or something like that. One fellow, who went down for the count of nine, said that when he first opened up his left eye, he heard him chanting "Onward Christian Soldiers." Anyway, he was scared stiff and praying like hell, when suddenly his eye saw the light, that was what he called it, and nobody saw any reason to contradict a kid who was up against it like he was. Chiselled into the marble slab above an outstretched hand in gilded inscription was: "He who gives is more blessed than he who receives." Just as he had finished reading that, Doc fainted with a left, crouched and jabbed straight out against this here intended parson's glass jaw. Well, he didn't go down for nine; not him, he had too much religion in him to do things halfway. One smart aleck said he was asleep so long that the orphanage physician saw it was a good chance and took out his appendix, his tonsils, and his mumps. After that he became very bitter; said God had laughed at him, when he was praying for help. He never could get that line out of his mind; he said it was sure right; but it took the religion out of him; he said the Lord had pointed it out just to rub it in. Well, he never came to no good. Those fellows in the home who wanted to coin money later on in life for preaching, never did, no siree. He was later expelled from the

home for selling all the hymn and prayer books in the chapel to a second-hand dealer for a dime and some irreligion pamphlet by a guy who made Ingersol watches.

After breakfast the kids were scattered throughout the halls and playroom and out on the front lawn and back yard; everyone had some duty to perform. They were sweepers, pick-up guys, the gardener's helper, wardrobe boys; none of the fellows ever got near the dining room or in Christine's kitchen; only the gals were used there; the nearest a boy could get to eats was through the laundry or the engine room. Oiling up and giving Ed, the engineer, a hand meant two meat sandwiches a day, and sometimes a piece of mince pie; or if a kid could get next to Ahnie in the laundry, he could come out with some biscuits with raisins every Wednesday night and coffee cake on Fridays. But it was pretty hard doing that without getting in wrong with the older guys, who soon spread the story that he was just sucking around the laundry, unless he was a good ball player and knew how to use his mits. Anyway, it seemed that the orphan asylum had been gotten up for the gals, for a boy didn't have a show whenever it came to getting any roll-of-honor money for picnics or any extra helpings out of the bread room. There were eight sweepers for the playroom, two fellows to clean and Sapolio the bowls in the washroom, and one broom-kid for the toilet. The basement playroom was divided into eight parts for the sweepers, and the fellows took turns picking up

the dirt with dustpans and shoving it into galvanized metal wastebboxes, which were carried out to the furnace at the end of the grounds overlooking the gully and emptied.

At the door leading out to the playground were two monitors who only let those out who had chicken coops or those who were pick-up boys. The windows on all sides were barred. The iron bars of the last window adjacent to the playroom washroom had been widened by some of the bigger guys with a pry, and almost everyone could wriggle through except Watermelonhead and Mushmellon; Mush Tate had other ways of running out. When the fellows got green-pea hash, goulash, or prunes on Sunday nights, they waited for the governors to go up to their meals, and then twisted through two bars concavely facing each other, fell down on their hands and knees as they hit the dirt, crept toward the wooden fence, climbed over the fence behind the hothouse, and beat it to Becker's Bakery.

School began at 8.45 a.m., and all marched in line over to the orphanage schoolhouse. Lorry after an academic workout, a sweating over arithmetic, geography and spelling, was put in the sixth grade. He found it hard to concentrate the first week, as the fellow behind him, one of the popular guys on the home baseball team, was always crunching Graham crackers which he had swiped the previous night from the bread room. The crumbs were scattered all over the floor like sawdust in a butcher shop.

Early in the morning they had German; the

teacher was a tall, thin, straight-up-and-down sort of dry beanpole, who doled out German verbs in a listless manner. Nobody cut up during her period; she knew how to hand out demerits by the fifties, so that at the end of her period a guy owed the orphan asylum money. Besides that, when a kid got in wrong with her, he didn't go out walking in summer time, and as far as Euclid Beach was concerned, he might as well be living in Fargo, North Dakota, or have the mumps. Anyway, it was awful hard workin' just doing nuthin' in her class and not getting into the limelight; for, nobody was interested in German no-how; what the hell did the kids care about the kaiser's bodyguard; Werner, the gardner, wasn't on it any more, or the linden trees under the goddam Potsdam court, or the railway station at Cologne. That's the way the fellows felt about it; so nobody got conspicuous for fear of being called on. There was a deadly silence for fifty minutes; nuthin' could be heard but the crunching of Graham crackers in the back of the room, nuthin' else, except Herman Mush Tate snoring once every little bit; not even the Germanic mutterings of *der des dem den* by the teacher.

After that was over the fellows had a short recess; they said they needed it; then they went back again full force to Miss Mc.'s class. By that time the fellows woke up: the cracker crunching had ceased; the crackers were gone. She usually whipped her class into action with a quick, short-winded geography test. The fellows liked that; they could get

grades, and they wanted to know where they stood with the teacher. Miss Mc. wasn't on her high horse either; she didn't mind playing up to the boys; she knew how to get around them, and everybody said she was sure a swell teacher.

Once she told a joke which all the gals afterwards whispered around in a hush. She was trying to whip up some interest in China; well, the guys hadn't gotten over German grammar that day, and they were all asleep and just wouldn't give a damn about the heathen Chinees. So she said: "If a girl dropped her garter in China, would the boys Pekin?" That woke the boys. The Graham cruncher in the back of the room suddenly started and let out a guffaw. Herman Mush Tate stopped snoring and got out his dictionary of sure-fire words, and put that one down, and a gal on the opposite side of the room, who was always looking over at the boys said: "Oh!" Besides, Miss Mc. had to ask a fellow in the front row to open up the windows to get some fresh air in the room, because it was stuffy, and Prunes, who got banged in the neck by a paperwad, jumped up and, without wanting to, made a funny noise. He said after class that it was his desk squeaking. Anyway, Miss Mc. felt things had gone too far; she got on the warpath, and for a whole week was flinging demerits around left and right at the kids. She appointed Prunes head blackboard-eraser to keep him up. The gal who said "Oh!" and who could never see the blackboard without taking a seat on the boys' side got three zeros in two days. She said she

was going to write home and tell her mother to tell the St. Louis trustee about it.

At 11:45 a.m. school let out for the morning: the fellows marched back to the playroom, washed up, and got ready for lunch. They were hungry; they felt starved. Monday was a bad day; they got goulash, one slice of bread, no butter, and nothing to drink. Only guys who were thin and underweight got milk, and Hans, who played on the basketball team, did the giant swing every day so his face would look hollow and he could get milk for supper. The few kids, who had aunts, a mother, or a second cousin in Milwaukee, who knew somebody who said she had a soft-hearted acquaintance in Cleveland, Ohio, couldn't wait till school was let out, so that they could climb over the fence and sponge a decent meal. The other ones, who got a dime or a quarter secretly from St. Paul or Chicago, or had a former inmate friend, ran out after classes to Becker's Bakery on Woodland Avenue to buy two cents' worth of stale doughnuts. Becker did good business, or would have done well, if some of the fellows weren't always walking out with a trayful of jelly rolls, while he was in the back room. If doughnuts were a week old they got seven for two cents; and if two days after baking, they only got three. Lots of the kids got boils on their necks and faces and they blamed it on Becker.

In the afternoons the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades had manual training; Mr. Martin was the director in charge; he was thin and used to trip

down the stairs, sideways, spittin' rapidly as he went down. The fellows kept out of the line of his fire. Whenever a big guy, who was aces high fightin' micks who came around the home now and then for rock-exercise, got too fresh, and started to shoot erasing gum around the room, he always said to an A pupil in wood-turning, "Call my brother, Dave." His brother, Dave, wasn't exactly a mick-scrapper, but the two of them together could sure work up some real manual training teamwork when they lured an eighth grader out into the hall. The boys made foot-stools, tabourets; the more skillful ones, those who grabbed the gold watches at the end of the year for their exhibition work, turned out sleds and library tables; they went at the jigsaw as at a fiddle. They were always showing off and often got deep cuts in their fingers. Lorry was a mean cuss to have around good lumber; Mr. Martin couldn't help but say as much, although he was never one to give up hope. Anyway, he told Lorry, who was digging his plane into a first-rate piece of maple, to take up mining instead. The eighth graders thought Lorry was a find, and whenever he got to seriously gluing, or trying to work the lathe, each guy offered a hand. Well, Mr. Martin passed him anyway, because he said the orphan asylum couldn't afford to keep him in manual training for more than a year.

After school was out the boys ran to the playroom and had a four o'clock lunch, a slice of rye or crust of bread with barrel molasses thinly brushed over it. The boys tried to get crusts with holes, gimmels is

what they called them, because the molasses got stuck thick in them. After lunch they made a dash for the back yard for play. A few guys snuck out on the front lawn to get a smell of grass; but if they were caught it meant fifty demerits, maybe, and staying in the rest of the afternoon.

They had teams, basketball, football, baseball; their athletics were well organized. Mr. G., the head governor, with blue eyes, thin hair, stocky, a speedy runner, outside in all weather, with a white woolen basketball sweater the sleeves of which were loosely tied around his neck, a long, hooked, have-his-own-way nose, not unseemly, with an architectural quality about it, had a passion for organization. He was great for teamwork and knew how to get the kids together.

He played the organ, tooted a bit on the piccolo, had a bust of Beethoven on his deal desk, and often got the kids who were clubby and up on current events into a group in his room, while he led nasally, but gleefully, "There's one wide river, and that's the Jordan, there's one wide river, there's one wide river to cross." He was ambitious, and when he couldn't get the boys' playroom to order soon enough, he sometimes got all cut up about it, went to pieces, and dragged a guy around the basement playroom between the benches; so that for the next few days the kid who had been mopped about the floor was about as much alive as Hector after that chariot-drag. Anyway, the guys liked him; he was the first one to introduce the Victrola into the dormitory; besides, he had tramped about a great deal through the states,

had worked his way to London, had been in an orphan asylum himself years back, and read "Huck-finn" to the kids in the evening.

Each year he went to New York, took in all the theaters, saw Al Jolson, bought the best seat in the house, and when he came back, spent a week telling the older guys before the dormitory lights were turned out how the conductors clanged their street car bells, and got the people a-movin' with their, "Step lively!" and how the ceiling of the Grand Central Station was done.

For the first couple of nights no one gave a tinker's damn about Lorry; he was just another "new-cumber," and no orphan who had been in the home for ten years, ever since he was in the kindergarten, was goin' to worry his head off about him. If the trustees wanted to pack more guys into the orphanage, that was their lookout; they knew how much money they could put out for such nonsense. Whenever a lot of newcumbers came in at the same time, the older guys who were taking wood-turning under Mr. Martin's brother, said the trustees were just trying to show off to the public.

Anyway, no one took any notice of Lorry until one sixth grader, who couldn't eat his goulash, thought he'd kill some time by finding out where this here bird came from and why. Well, Lorry was pretty lonesome, and didn't mind having a few words with a guy who sat at the same table with him, and he started to open up a bit. As soon as Lorry began and went along in that Missouri drawlish way, sayin'

shore for a Cleveland shure, and cahw, for car, they knew right then there'd be something doin', and they weren't goin' to miss such a chance, especially in the dining room; there wasn't any fun out of goulash, and they might as well take it out on a newcumber. They wanted to know all about his life story, where he'd bought his city knickers from, if he'd ever seen a gal's pants, and how come his paw had died, and did he, and what for.

Well, Lorry got to seein' there was something up; his ears reddened at a high pitch, and he got more Missourian than ever. Some kids, who couldn't hold themselves back, started to spit into their hands; Prunes had his ears out more than ever, and got so much taken up with the newcumber that he couldn't eat more than five plates of goulash, which got Shrimp sure sore, as the sight of goulash disgusted him, and Prunes hadn't reached his plate yet. Lorry began to see a little how things were, and he closed up tight, and wouldn't say boo.

A big guy, who sat at the head of the table and whom the governors didn't fool around much with, said: "Say, newcumber, I'm thinkin' y'ud better be talkin', because if yu think yer much around here, we kin show yu what we do with newcumbers who get fly!"

Although Lorry was from Missouri he wasn't exactly tickled to be shown, so he did his best. Well, Lorry was scared blue; some guys who had been at the table were talkin' about newcumber initiatin' that night, and another kid used the word maul.

Besides, after supper, Dan Maxwell, an eighth grader, who got lunches from Ed, the engineer, for oiling up the dynamo and sweeping out the furnace, was cracking Watermelonhead on the knuckles with the end of the broomstick, and all for nuthin', it seemed to him. And when Watermelonhead picked up a horseshoe and caught Dan Maxwell on the charley horse, another big guy who was standing around and slobbering all over himself with chuckles, said he would go upstairs to the marble hall and chisel in Watermelon's name. Anyhow, Lorry didn't stand around to see what happened, and besides, it took Dan Maxwell eight minutes to come to; but when Watermelon went over to the general hospital, he didn't mention any names, but said he thought a handball had ruptured him.

Before the lights were turned out in the dormitory, Bucket, whom Doc called a scallawag, and whom the older guys mauled every time something was missing from their playroom boxes, came around to tell Lorry that if he had any money, he had better ditch it inside his pillowcase, otherwise, he might as well donate it to the old women's home a few blocks down. Anyhow, Bucket must have known what he was talking about, for that night a bunch of older guys picked up Lorry's mattress and carried it onto the porch roof where he found himself early the next morning. He didn't know what had happened to him; he was as blue and stiff as a spike, and when he went to look for his twenty cents inside the pillowcase, it was gone.

It soon got around that you could do anything to that newcumber, Lorry, and he wouldn't even wake up to say how-de-doo to the fellows who were takin' the trouble to maul him and make him a real orphan. Shrimp said it was a waste of time foolin' around with a dead guy like that, and, that anyway, he didn't know he was living probably. When Dan Maxwell got the story, he came down especially every night for a week from the little kids' dormitory, where he was the head monitor to see that that fool of a newcumber got a well-worked-up mauling.

Well, Lorry was starting to get downright miserable, and wanted to run away; he hardly left the playroom, and took to sitting on the steam pipes that ran around the playroom or moping on the cement window sill looking out through the bars into the court. When Dan got wise to this, he stalled around the court, whittled a fine point on the edge of a long broomstick, and stood around layin' low, till Lorry got to taking on that heart-breakin' look. Then he ran the point of his broomstick into his ribs, and if Lorry talked back, he flew into the playroom, and whacking him on the knuckles, said he'd show a newcumber whether he could answer back an eighth grader.

Lorry felt he had taken all he could, and wrote home to his mother that they were starving him and that the orphan asylum kids would be running him into pneumonia or something if he had to stick in that crazy asylum any longer. His mother was all taken up, but Henry said the kid was just lonesome,

and that it would do him good to get a few hard knocks. However, she sent him a dime a week, which she enclosed in a letter, but the superintendent, who opened all the letters, said it was not right to send money to them, as it made the others jealous, and besides, he wrote they had everything they wanted.

As fall came on Lorry got to going round with some of the smaller sixth graders, and had gotten on far enough to be in whack with a seventh grader who found out he was getting some money from the outside now and then. A few days before school began again in September, he was forced into a fight with the assistant head wardrobe boy who belonged, besides, to the literary club, wore a necktie, and was one of Mr. G.'s pets.

Lorry had gotten all the pastin' he was looking for those first few months, and he sure wasn't going to go out of his way to get himself mixed up with one of Miss W.'s head helpers. Lorry was awfully hard on stockings, and he often skinned them at the knees, foolin' about with fourth and fifth graders on the roofs of chicken coops at the edge of the back grounds. Anyway, this here wardrobe guy told him one day he was sick and tired making out a new list for him every time he ripped his pants or ruined his stocking knees so that the sewing girls couldn't patch them.

Well, he started to order him around and gave Lorry a push.

Lorry had heard, anyhow, that those wardrobe boys thought they were too much, and although he

wasn't for making trouble over a little bit of a push, he said back to him, "Aw, go on, ya wardrobe boy!"

Well, a guy who had been a wardrobe boy for three years, and been in the home for eight, wasn't going to take that kinda gab from a green newcumber, so he stepped on his foot and folded his arms and bucked him harder, and Lorry, who wasn't intendin' to get serious, sort of nudged him with one shoulder; as long as there were no fists in it, he didn't mind playing along just sort of sore-like.

That got the wardrobe boy all in a huff, and he tried to give him a kick in the shins, but Lorry side-stepped, and tripped him up. The wardrobe boy went down flat on his face. That sure scared Lorry; he wanted to run, but he stood there; there was no place to run to, not for long anyway.

Well, the wardrobe boy was all hot, and about to give him a real lickin', when the whistle blew: "All in."

"Yu jest wait till after supper," he whispered as Mr. G. went by, "I'll jus knock the holy stuffings out of ya!"

"All right, I'll wait; no you won't!" came back Lorry who didn't know exactly what he was saying.

In the dining hall it got around that that newcumber, Lorry, was goin' to try to fight with the assistant head wardrobe boy, who sat at the table across from him and who yelled over so that all the big kids could hear: "Lissun, newcumber, dontcha ferget, I challenge yu, in the playroom after supper, and don't

think yu kin back out; I've already told Pinky, the door monitor, to keep yu in that playroom."

Well, Lorry didn't say a word; he saw he was in for it. All the kids at his table said their prayers way out loud before and after supper, and kept winking at Lorry. The big kid at the head of the table said it was about time somethin' was happening around the home; as far as he could see, the fellows weren't the killers they used to be, when he first came to the home.

Well, he said, he would referee, and he'd be glad to show a newcumber who sat at his own table a step or two. He went through the motions at the table and told Lorry to meet him downstairs in the washroom for a few minutes' workout just before the scrap.

Lorry didn't say nuthin'; he didn't know what to say; he was all flushed, couldn't eat, and felt all crampy and hollow inside, and wanted to get up and go to the toilet. But he didn't move; he didn't dare; everybody would hiss at him if he left the dining hall that way and yell he was running off. He could see he was done for; they weren't kiddin'; they were all for a killin' maul to the end.

He thought of running away from the orphan asylum; it was no use staying there any longer and always getting beat up; if he only knew where the depot was, he would walk down Woodland Avenue to Superior and get on a train and go back to Kansas City; maybe the conductor would let him ride free. But he didn't know how to find his way around in a big city like Cleveland, and besides, if a cop saw him

in that asylum uniform out on the street asking the way to the depot, they would probably lock him up or send him back, and he would get expelled, and he'd be disgraced for life.

Everybody was staring at him; the kids at the table across were putting wads of doughy biscuit in water and placing it on the handle of the spoon, which they thumped down with their hands and which kept clipping him on the back of the neck. His mouth was all twisted up, and Mush Tate, who was feelin' kinda soft about the newcumber asked him if he wanted his biscuit.

Shrimp told Mush Tate to lay off, and said to Lorry that he'd better eat up as much as he could so that he could take on as much weight as possible before the fight.

Lorry gave Mush his biscuit, and Mush told him not to get eaten up about that wardrobe boy, that he was a lot of goulash anyway, and full of bull.

The big guy at the head of the table kept playing up the washroom workout to Lorry, and when he didn't come across, he got up from his chair, reached way over the table, stuck his head in Lorry's face, passing a fork across it, and pressing it up against his nose, growled, "Lissen, newcumber, I'm referee'n this here fight, and I'm seein' it comes off right, get me."

"Aw, let 'im alone," said Mush Tate, counting and stacking the raisins in his biscuit.

"How's that!" yowled the big guy.

"Oh, cow's ass, my eye!" came back Mush Tate, digging into the biscuit for more raisins.

"Yu'd better dry up, Mush Tate, I haven't given yu a lickin' for a long time!" returned the big guy.

"Forget it, Barrutt, you fat ass," yelled over Dan Maxwell, who sat at the seventh- and eighth-grade table, and who was listening to the gab, "dontch yu go monkeying round with that there newcumber. I had 'im signed up the first day he came here; if ther's goin' to be any workout, I'll take ker of it, get me, hollerhead?"

That sort of cooled the big guy off and there was nuthin' more said about the newcumber; when the dining hall got to prayin' again, the big guy winked at the other kids, while Mush Tate had his head low, his nose touching the oilcloth, while he packed the raisins in his shirt pocket.

Well, the gong had rung, the prayers were over, and the kids were running down to the basement playroom; the wardrobe boy took his time, pushed his way through, casual-like, the fellows hanging around outside the door waiting to see Lorry.

Some of the fifth graders waved at him, "Go easy with him, Gabby, he's got to be confirmed some day, yu know."

The wardrobe boy pulled up his suspenders and closed one eye good-naturedly.

Down in the playroom a crowd of fellows were standing around Lorry; the wardrobe boy was in no hurry to get down; he had some work to get off for Miss W. he told one of his helpers, which couldn't

wait, and as for that sixth grade newcumber, he could clean him up at any time.

Dan Maxwell was around and tried to spar with him, and Watermelon, who was looking on, got in the way; and when a guy hit his fist up against that louse's head, he was crippled for weeks. Dan ran to the washroom, put his knuckles under the hot water faucet, picked up a plunger standing in the corner, and chased the hell out of Watermelonhead, cracking him on top of the head with the rubber every time he was in reach.

Watermelon was looking crazily for horseshoes, but couldn't find any, and Bucket, who was slippery as they make them, jumped on Dan's back and couldn't be thrown.

Mush Tate was argufying with Prunes, Shrimp, Spunk, and all the goulashes, he said, in the wardrobe, put together. He hadn't warmed up yet and wasn't referring to his dictionary, which he always carried with him. He was recitin' from memory and said he was willing to take on the whole orphan asylum including Doc's hobnails and the mayor.

Everybody was excited and waiting for the wardrobe boy to come down. Lorry was all splintered up inside; he still had the cramps, and the waiting besides was killin'; he was about ready to hold out his face to the wardrobe boy, take his lickin', anything as long as he could get it over with.

Finally the wardrobe boy came down, took off his coat, neatly folded it and laid it down on the back of the bench, walked over to Lorry, took off his glasses

for him, and spitting in his hands, stepped back, to give him time to put out his arms to guard.

Mush Tate held Lorry's signet ring for him; at least Lorry thought he had handed it to him, but he wasn't sure; he was too flustered at the time; anyway, some one told him it was against Queensbury rules fightin' with rings on. Anyway, he never saw the signet ring again, and Mush Tate said he must have given it to Bucket.

The wardrobe boy waded in, and Lorry backing away, fell over Spunk's back; Spunk, who had been kneeling down waiting for Lorry, got a kick in the rump by Dan Maxwell, who didn't want to see the show broken up that way. Governors were bad enough that way, he said, and he wasn't goin' to have an orphan play a dirty trick like that on him.

Lorry got up and tried to walk away; he felt he had no chance; then Mush Tate butted in, got a rope, which he tied onto the two columns and play-room benches, and made everybody get behind it.

The wardrobe boy came in again and clipped Lorry on the back of the ear, and Lorry, putting his left out half-heartedly, grazed the wardrobe boy's nose. Mush Tate started to megaphone through his hands and got some rooters for the newcumber.

The wardrobe boy brushed back his hair, crouched scientifically, and hit Lorry on the back of the head, stinging him.

Suddenly realizing that he was still on his feet and not hurt he came to and doubled up his guard, pasting the wardrobe boy one in the left kidney.

Bucket yelled out, "Wow!" and Mush Tate said, trying to get on the nerves of the wardrobe boy, "Sickem, goulash."

Everybody laughed, and the wardrobe boy, getting out of sorts, decided to finish it right then and there.

He ran into Lorry, with open arms, as though he was swinging Indian clubs, and Lorry mussed up his hair with his right and stung him on the ear with a left. A loud cheer went up, and the wardrobe boy, his face like hell's bells ringing, stamped into him, jumping on the playroom boards with a lot of noise, and Lorry, a bit blinded by the swinging of arms under the electric bulbs and unnerved by a fellow stamping his feet against the boards, got a grazing left across his cheek.

"Go on, Gabby!" cried a few wardrobe followers; but Lorry, who had been half-closing his eyes every time the other fellow came in, opened them up, and saw that he wasn't guarding at all. He left-jabbed the wardrobe boy in the stomach and shook up his teeth with a right as he stamped in again.

The wardrobe boy, losing all of his haberdashery sureness, kept running in, offering his face, as the pascal lamb on the altar, and Lorry, smashing out, caught him between the eyes.

"Wot a sock!" yelled a kid who had just gotten angry at the wardrobe boy that morning.

The wardrobe boy wasn't looking any more and threw his arms about, like straight broomsticks, as he stampeded in, and Lorry got more calculating.

Dan, who had to go off to the engine room, didn't stay till the finish, and the big guy, who sat at the head of the sixth-grade table, stopped the fight; he wasn't going to stand around and watch a newcumber put it over a fellow of the home; he stepped between them, told the wardrobe boy to go to the washroom and wash up, and gave Lorry a sock in the eye, because, he said, he didn't want him to be getting too much around the home.

Well, after that, the wardrobe boy didn't have much to say to Lorry and Lorry didn't go about boasting either; he didn't want any more socks in the eye; besides, he sort of felt sorry for the come-down it meant to the wardrobe boy to be licked by a green newcumber.

However, the wardrobe boy seemed to have heard that Lorry had a signet ring, and he went around and said that he'd been fightin' with it on; that started to get around, and some other wardrobe helpers had it that that looney newcumber had had a big spike inside his fist, and another kid, who had once gotten hurt foolin' with Watermelonhead, said he was standin' behind the ropes right next to Bucket and that Mush Tate had slipped that newcumber a piece of a horseshoe as big as four knuckles.

CHAPTER IV

HERMAN MUSH TATE

At the end of the back playground there was a steep hill which led down to a gully which ran around to a pond where the kids went ice-skating on the sly. In February, when the grounds were deserted-looking, and a fellow was sick and tired of the schoolhouse, and all fed up sitting on the steam pipes in the playroom to keep warm, he snuck down the hill, through the bushes, over the diphtheria stream, round the gully, and almost up to the Standard Oil tanks.

In summer, when a bunch of kids went down and around the hill to roast potatoes that they had hauled out of the kitchen, or snuck off just for the mean-cussedness of running out, they had to be very careful about brushing up against bushes and getting burrs stuck onto their stockings or suits, because they were a sure give-away; afterwards, when dear old Doc resigned because he wanted to give that bothersome heart of his a rest from those scallawags, they named those burrs after the new superintendent, who was awfully up on home-affairs. They called those burrs peiser-spies, and if a fellow forgot to remove them, he was sure in for it.

Anyway, lots of times when the ice was thick on the pond, and the snow good for coasting, and the kids had just about burnt up their pants on the

steam pipes, and gone out for a snowball fight or a bit of slidin' on a thin streak of ice at the edge of the hill, the Irish micks from nowhere came around and challenged them to a snowball fight.

Well, the kids were always ready for fightin' of any sort; that was one home tradition they stuck by through thick and thin. It was no joke foolin' with micks; they were serious all right enough; for as soon as they got warmed up, they started to put rocks inside the snowballs making out they were icy-like.

Well, then the big kids of the home got into it. Many a guy got a hole in his head; those micks were sure-fire slingers, no spiffin'; but the home boys, like a phalanx of the Roman pretorian guard moved down on them, backing the micks through the dead winter shrubbery and over the pond, across the tracks behind the Standard Oil tanks.

Once when this happened, Herman Mush Tate—his face was round and flat like an enamelled plate of mush, a whole orphan and a half-wit, is what they called him, and champeen argufier of the home—was stalling around the oil tanks with three other fellows after the scrappin'. Herman Mush Tate was always hanging around after fights were over, looking for battlefield souvenirs, agates that fell out of a guy's pocket when he was taking an honest-to-god swing at a mick, and later he would talk himself up, boasting how he had stepped on the necks of three micks himself. But the guys got wise to Mush, and after the scraps, they would sneak down from the dormitory at nights, when the others were dead snor-

ing, and search his playroom box for their taws, knives, extra pair of shoelaces, and marbles.

Once during examination week, when the fellows were off guard and losing weight over physics, physiology, and "Silas Marner," some awful big hauls were made from the playroom boxes. The fellows had their suspicions, but just couldn't be dead-sure. Shrimp said Bonehead-Star-Wolfe was missing from the manual training laboratory Friday afternoon, and Mooty said it was Bucket, who was always missing from everything except meals, who was pulling off the hauls. They called him Bucket, because the very tip of his nose came out like a tiny promontory, on which, the home boys said, they could hang a tin bucket. Besides, Mooty went on, it was just like Bucket with his nose to be sniffing things out of the boxes. Couldn't Bucket tell you from any part of the playroom in just what box the Washington pies were, and to the box-number, where the stale doughnuts were hidden?

"Aw, go on, that's no trick," said Shrimp, "who couldn't smell out Becker's doughnuts for a mile or more?"

Anyway, the guys had their suspicions; so one night, the seventh and eighth graders crept down the stone steps, not making a sound; no one had so much as mentioned Mush, but they all knew beforehand they were going to make one grand dash for box 13 and give it a search. They just had to find out who was pulling off those big hauls. The tallest guy in the home had missed a quarter and two pairs

of brand new shoelaces which he had swiped from a shoe store while asking the manager if he knew the way back to the orphanage which was across the street.

Well, the tallest guy in the home said the thing had to be looked into; that they weren't going to put up with crooks around the home, that at least, the orphans ought to be straight with one another, and he started to pull off the brotherly-orphan stuff; he was always doing that when he was trying to get a first grader's every-other-Wednesday's sausage, which made Shrimp want to tell him to tie that bull outside.

When they got down to the landing they heard some strange and hair-raising scurryin'; it sounded like rats. Shrimp, the sawed-off guy in the seventh grade, said he'd better be going back up to the dormitory as Martin was giving him a spittin' physics test the next morning; Mooty wasn't keen on staying around either, and Spunk, who couldn't get a job at first after he left the home, because he was undersized, said he had an appointment with the kitchen pantry.

But just then the tallest guy in the home switched on the lights and they saw a short, billiken-like, crouched-over figure, with a white sheet over it, breeze through the door like a Kansas cyclone. It sure could run; over the benches it straddled, right past Bonehead-Star-Wolfe's chicken coop, down the hill, jumping up and down from cinder to rotten log, like a witch on the broomstick in the Walpur-

gisnacht, around the gully, over the diphtheria stream, around the pond, the kids shootin' rocks after it like hell's fire. When they got near the oil swamps around the Standard Oil tanks and railroad tracks, the fellows started to manœuver and the tallest guy in the home sent kids and scouts both ways around the swamps. When they got there and the fellows met face to face they saw nothing but the white sheet on the ground. They gave up in downright disgust and built a fire.

Each fellow had his own suspicions, but no one mentioned the right name.

Shrimp who hadn't been wearing himself out running for no ghost, straggled in when the fire was up, and still maintained the guy who was pulling off those heavy hauls was Bonehead-Star-Wolfe, who was caught one night by Mr. G., the governor, swiping eggs from his own coop.

Well, the fellows had no more heart for that kinda talk and sat around, tired and fagged out, staring listlessly into the fire. Then along came Mooty and Spunk, who had been lagging behind long enough to swipe some potatoes out of the kitchen; they were carrying a gunnysack, which bulged and rolled from side to side, like a tied-up pig, full of potatoes which they emptied into the fire and the fellows stayed up all night and feasted on roasted potatoes.

Two days later a d.t. brought back Mush Tate; a bull had caught him on a M.K.T. freight headin' for Chi. Doc gave him a long lecture about the Bible and the prodigal son, dragged in Moses, Abraham,

the Maccabeans, the Holy Ghost, and threatened to expel him. Besides, he gave him a hundred and fifty demerits and put him in company.

For a whole week Mush was on tenterhooks; he didn't know whether he was in the home or a city fellow. He got awfully white looking, and the fellows felt downright sorry for him. Only Shrimp, who was always too fresh anyway, asked Mush on the sly, what Doc had to tell him about the Holy Ghost.

Well, anyhow, coming back to the story, some micks who were hiding behind the tanks after that snowball fight and waiting for the other big kids to go back, snuck up behind them and asked what the hell they were doing around there anyhow.

"Tell 'em nuthin'," said Herman Mush, who always had the right word at the right time.

"Listen, orphan," said one hard-looking mick, and he wasn't kiddin' either, "ya ain't got no mother or father now; but in jes a minute ya ain't even goin' to hev yourself to be talkin' to, hear me?"

Well, Mush heard him all right and kinda cooled off considerably as the spokesman and found for himself a healthier position back of the three orphan guys.

Well, the other orphans weren't going to be bluffed that way, so they stepped up to this hard-looking Irish customer and said: "Shut up, you bastard!"

Well, Mush got awfully nervous; he just wanted to run, to go off somewhere, nowhere, somewhere; yes, he was trying to get up some high-powered reason for pulling a Marathon dash, but his legs just wouldn't

carry him an inch. The orphans took off their jackets—they never wore overcoats at any time of the winter—and Mush sort of stepped up, without appearing to be brazen, and said in a helpful-like way: "I'll hold your coats for you," and he did.

After that whenever there was a fight, and Mush happened to be around, some one entirely for Mush's benefit and sole pleasure would say to one of the young scrappers: "My dear, may I please hold your coat for you?" And if Shrimp was around he would ask Mush if he could have the next waltz.

However, Mush had a good rep with the boys; he was a great guy for causes, and any fellow at his table or the table opposite who would pass over his enamelled tin plate of mush to Herman Mush Tate, had his argufying protection for always. They had to hand it to him, he was the champeen arguier of the home; and when he whipped out of his jacket pocket his de luxe notebook, a sure enough dictionary of wicked words, a string of earthy words that had the Bible going, he gave the other guy fireworks.

Besides, the older fellows, who were good in economics, said he was a great benefit to the home, for as sure as he hung around, no food would go to waste.

"Well," said Shrimp, it was just like Shrimp to be putting in remarks like that, "he might be a benefit to the trustees, but he's sure no good to Bonehead-Star-Wolfe's chickens; since Mush has been gobbling up all the green-pea hash, and breakfast mush in the

home, Bonehead-Star-Wolfe's white leghorns have been starving to death."

Lorry had heard a great deal about Mush Tate and was anxious to see him do his stuff, so one day while he was in the washroom a pal of his ran in and told him Mush Tate was shootin' the bull and heavy too. Lorry ran out and got in with a large crowd of other guys watching and sicking Mush onto a seventh grader. Mush had that bible of his out; he was always referring to the old testament; Doc had seen him at it on occasions and felt inclined to forgive much of his goings-on because of that, and began his cannonading.

"Think yer much hu," he always started that way to put the other guy in his place, "come on, say something, down the hill, down the gully, around the bend, Mr. Berger's red flannel underwear, Doc's overalls, tomato cans, Christine's drawers, green-pea hash, goulash, prunes, aw hell, talk, think you're in school, stale cakes, Washington pies, Becker's doughnuts, heavy neck boils, Abraham's bosom, wash your own, Doc's clodhoppers, Doc's overalls twice, the Lord shall not want, God humbles the proud, I am thy rod and thy staff, hymn 86, hymn 87, hymn 88, Ring's tobacco heart, Deutschland über alles, aw, bull, come on talk, you don't stutter, you're not sunburnt. . . ."

Following which the other guy said rather briefly, he just didn't have Mush's fluency, "Knock this off my shoulder."

Well, Mush just ignored that and went right on;

"Doc's clodhoppers twice, Benny Marble's bungers, shoe polish, spittin' daubers, prunes again, Bone-head-Star-Wolfe's sore-head, his chicken coop, his lame white leghorn, so's his uncle in Milwaukee. . . ." Lorry was impressed and tried to learn to do it himself.

On Sunday mornings they had chapel; that was torture for the fellows; a damn good day spoiled; everyone was blue and down on Sunday mornings; it just was no use living; a guy never had a moment to himself. Always some pestering governor hootin' his whistle and making kids stay in all for nuthin' too; that's what hurt so much.

Well, they had to go; sometimes a guy tried to get out of it by going over to the hospital and saying he was sick, but they were always bothering a fellow's mouth with those nuisance thermometers, so as he couldn't talk and explain how sick he was. So it was no use; they just had to climb up those steep flights of stairs, all marching in line, to the top of the schoolhouse building to the chapel. The opening prayers were just dry as bones and all the fellows snored to beat the band; the more wakeful ones whittled pencils, and the good guys in school got all earnest and red; the hell with them birds, it was just because of them they had chapel. They made old Doc believe the kids really wanted it, think of that.

Well, after they had gulped down lots of oaths to the Almighty, and gotten to page 96, Ring, the organist—they said he was once a great musician and played in a brass band in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, but

that since then he had gotten low and out with drink—began the hymns. That sort of brought the fellows to; there was something in that anyway; so they sang as though they were taking their Friday afternoon showers.

Well, when they got to hymn 108, page 77, the fellows were in tiptop shape, and they came out like some young debs in all their glory: "God humbles the proud, God humbles the proud, And the lowly he raises." At this point the guys in the second row got out their safety pins and jabbed the guys in the front row through the opening between the seats, "And the lowly he raises," the second row was in a religious fervor; and when Milwaukee Lager Ring admonished the older boys and told them to repeat the last line, the second row repeated, *con brio*, "And the lowly he raises," the second row jabbed again with religious frenzy, and sufferin' cats, the first row rose to the occasion. The first-row kids were squirming like monks in their hairshirts. Yes, those boys had religion in them.

After the hymn was done the sermon came around; that was the hardest blow of all. Sermons, that's all a fellow ever got from morning till night; a kid simply never could get any peace; they were always torturing him. The second-row kids got out their ball bearings and beebees and started to wrap them up in hymn paper and made some tough spitballs which they casual-like—while watching Doc out of the corners of their eyes with deep chapel attention—shot over at the girls' side.

But Doc had a surprise for them that morning; he was looking fine and fit; he had a smile on him like Robert Browning, and he told the boys he was going to talk that day on David and Goliath. Doc, rubbing his hands gleefully—he always rubbed in those sermons that way before he started—said it was a boy's story, and he knew they would take it to heart.

The fellows got sort of worked up, when he began that take-it-to-heart stuff. It sure made a guy sore enough to have to hear a sermon, but when Doc began a sermon with a sermon, well, he was just pulling their leg.

Well, when Doc got into the story, he warmed up, and the fellows got awfully interested in that whale of a scrap. They were never so quiet in all their lives; when it came to those sling-shots, Doc was sure good; he knew his green-pea hash, and used his rights and lefts as an actor in a serious drama. It was a perfect sermon; a real hit with the guys; everybody said that Israelite, David, even though he did hang around sheep too much, was a sure-shot, and that they wished he would come to the home and help them fight the micks.

When the sermon was over, Doc was beaming all over; he told the boys that if they kept up their good behavior something nice would happen.

All afternoon, between meals, innings, lunch, the fellows were talking about that David and Goliath scrap. Think way back in those olden times, they could get up a fight like that.

After supper, when the governors had gone up for

their meal, a lot of big guys snuck out; some one said Mush Tate was along with them; and after they had wheedled some baked potatoes, and a pie out of Christine, the cook, they went over near the telegraph pole and started to take shots to see who was the best hit amongst them. There was a great deal of argument, and all the kids got worked up over it.

Then some one said they ought to try the schoolhouse windows to see who was the David amongst them, so they appointed a committee to gather two good-sized rocks. Later on, one of the door monitors, who intended to go to a seminary, when he was confirmed, said it was Mush Tate who initiated the schoolhouse windows idea.

Well after all the windows were out, and the glass came crashing down with a bang, Shrimp and the tallest guy in the home were out to get those stained glass ones in the chapel: those were the only ones they couldn't reach, and it was a sore disappointment to the guys. At any rate neither Shrimp for all his smartness nor the tallest guy in the home could bag one of them beautiful chapel windows.

However, the following morning, when the little kids were standing about and staring with great awe at the schoolhouse, which looked like an old haunted house, or a building after a fire, one little second grader yelled out, "Oh lookey, the chapel winders are missin' too."

Well the older guys were never so surprised in all their lives, they just craned their necks and opened their mouths wide like country hicks catching flies.

"Why, what the hell!" gasped and gaped the tallest guy in the home, and each fellow sized up the other.

They finally agreed among themselves that no one from the outside had bagged those chapel beauties because just as Shrimp had hoisted his last boulder at one of them clover-leaf affairs some one hisst, "Doc!" and they all scooted like wild-fire, rushed through the playroom door, and when Doc came in, they were playing jumping-over-backs.

Well, there weren't any mentioning of names, but something snuck up the schoolhouse stairs to the chapel and bagged those carnations from the inside; yes sir, that's all there was to it; they could sure prove it, because the only two left in the David-Goliath contest were Shrimp and the tallest guy in the home, and they never got as near as two telegraph poles from them colored specks; all the fellows knew that they didn't do it; they would swear on Doc's overalls they didn't.

Well, there weren't any mentioning of names, but the fellows had their suspicions. Shrimp looked awful knowing-like, and he sort of said off-hand-like—Shrimp was always passing those cuttin' remarks—"Where was Mush when the schoolhouse windows were done?"

When Doc heard those windows splashing around the back playground, he almost choked on a filet of sole bone, and his heart got awfully weakened. He sent out a general fire alarm: all the governors hurried down; everybody was excited, the whistle

blew rapidly: "All in seats! All in order now!" and Doc paced up and down, with his hand on his heart, crying: "Who were the scallawags out there who broke the schoolhouse windows? If they don't own up right away, I'll expel every eighth grade boy in the home!"

Then a recess was called, to give the culprits a chance to own up.

Well, the eighth grade kids sure looked down; it was no fun being kicked out that way, after waiting ten years to be confirmed and get a suit of long pants.

Doc was standing near the door, and some one said the door monitor was talking to him. Doc went up right after that to his office and five minutes later Mush Tate, who had been sitting quiet-like on the radiator pipes in a corner, readin' the Bible and Webster's, was called and told he was wanted in the office. Shrimp said he took the Bible with him; he sure needed the good offices of religion then, said one stuck-up show-off who got 94 in "Silas Marner," think of that. Everyone was awed. When he went up, the fellows began to whisper; it was a dirty rotten shame; some one said they ought to mob the door monitor; he was one of them still-waters who was always readin' anyway; but then another guy said that was just what Doc wanted; so he could expel them all and get in good with the trustees so the home wouldn't have to buy all those pairs of long pants for the confirmation kids.

Herman Mush Tate was expelled; that was the

last thing Doc did before he resigned. Doc said the next Sunday morning in chapel that the home couldn't tolerate such scallawags, at this all the girls looked over at Mush and he hung his head, and that it was his bounden duty to rid the orphanage of such festerings.

That last remark just tickled Shrimp, and he nudged poor Mush and said, "I always knew you were something like that. Doc sure knows his goulash."

"Aw, let him alone," said the other fellows; "how would you like it, if you were expelled, and Doc right in the chapel called you a festering?"

Why Shrimp was always picking on Mush, no one knew; but they all agreed that Shrimp had it in for him. Some one said that when they were newcumbers and in the kindergarten, it was Mush who gave him that hoodoo name, Shrimp, and because of that he could never grow, and that he swore to get even with him.

Well, Doc went on ranting, said he couldn't bear such heart-breaking incidents any longer, that it was too much for him, he was old, and his heart was very, very weak, and that he was going to hand over the administrative reins to the assistant superintendent.

The girls started to whine and snivel into their bandana handkerchiefs, and the fellows on the opposite side of the chapel said: "Aw, shut up!"

This enraged Doc and he said that he would yet before he left make an example of some of those culprits in the first and second rows.

Herman Mush Tate was given his last talking to in the marble hall; when everything was over and Mush knew it was final, he stood there alone outside of the office door which had been closed in his face, wistfully gazing at the memorial slabs. He sadly took out his notebook in which he kept all his sure-fire words and wrote down: "He who gives is more blessed than he who receives." . . . "In memory of"—in gilded letters chiselled in the blue and white marble—"Martin Cornhill, donor, \$500.00."

Then he walked down to the playroom, and all the boys circled around him, the big and the small, and each one approached him, half-timidly, like a shop-keeper asking his alderman for a political favor, and shook his hand. Mush looked downcast and deeply affected. Slowly he gathered together the papers, the ball bearings from several roller skates, a bag full of agates, which Shrimp scrutinized very closely, three horseshoes which had fallen off the gardener's nag on different occasions—all this from his playroom box, number 13, his entire estate. Then lingeringly he took from his jacket pocket his notebook and fingered its pages as a Hindoo would the Bhagavad-Gita. Finally he turned about face, with a military gesture, on the boys, looked each one in the eye, and willed his notebook and all the contents therein to Bonehead-Star-Wolfe who wore nearsighted glasses and stuttered. That was his last ironical gesture.

After that he went around to do his farewell to the Manual Training School to say good-bye to Mr. Martin, the director in charge, and shook his hand and

said: "Mr. Martin, although you never gave me the gold watch for good conduct and industry, I always thought you were a noble man."

Mr. Martin, who was trying to T square the top of a tabouret which Lorry had just planed and who was just telling Lorry to try the runner of a sled instead, nodded absent-mindedly to Mush: "That's all right, Herman, boys'll be boys."

Before Mush went away the boys shined and polished his shoes just as though he was being confirmed, they wanted to do him all the honors, and another carried his package to the gate. They all asked him to write, and he said he would. At the gate he turned around for the last time. The water fountain was quiet and mute like a still-born child and the grass withered and dwarfed from January winds was like worn green dollar bills. Then he went away.

After that no one ever heard from Herman Mush Tate. One fellow said he had been killed riding the rods on a fast mail heading toward Ogden, Utah, but a former inmate from Minneapolis wrote and said he had seen Herman hanging around a labor bureau looking for work, and praying, he added, to God he'd never get it.

As time went on Herman Mush Tate became a legendary hero and several stories were told of him. One that he had drifted into an Oklahoma Indian reservation and had won an argument from an Injun chief and that now he was living in the happy hunting grounds where there is always Indian summer.

There was another rumor to the effect that he was working for Fred Harvey in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

No one ever knew what had become of Herman Mush Tate's notebook. Some one said that Bone-head-Star-Wolfe, before his uncle had taken him home, had buried it somewhere underneath a burning bush down the gully. But no one ever knew. It was always talked about with awe and in the same tone as the Israelites speak of the mosaic slabs on which Jehovah struck lightning and the ten commandments.

CHAPTER V

BONEHEAD-STAR-WOLFE

Lorry had gotten used to the orphan asylum, and like the others, called it the home; he wasn't so lonesome any more, although he still looked forward to the time when he'd get out, and go back to Kansas City again.

He wondered how the waters of the Caw ran, and if the excursion boat was still going up and down the muddy Missouri, if the West Bottoms was still the same, whether they had torn down the old depot yet, and if Muriel had a new beau. There wasn't much use wondering about girls in the home, one never had a chance to talk to one and there were very few kids who were nervy enough to ever take the chance. Gals were things that an orphan kid neither looked at, at least not so that anyone could notice it, nor spoke to; the older guys wouldn't allow it. If a fellow went in for sufferin' and maulings he could try that stuff, but a fellow who wanted to get his blue serge and be confirmed some day from the home never thought out loud about the inmates that lived on the other side of the main building. Why the boys and girls weren't on talkin'-terms with one another, no one ever really had straight; they had been mad at one another ever since Doc had come, for all they knew. Only kindergartners and first graders hung

around their sisters or ever went in whack with them. That was how it was.

However, there were different tales about; one had it that the kids and gals of the home, way back in 1896, once had a football game, and that in the last quarter the gals nosed the kids out of the game by a fluke safety, and that ever since then you couldn't get a fellow near a gal. Anyway, it all seemed to have something to do with a game, for another had it that Doc, who was entertaining Stix, the president of the home, was walking up and down with him across the fields, their arms around one another like two old cronies, and that every time a kid got the ball and was about to carry it, they were in the way.

Well, those old days were gone; the myths were fast going out—all that was happening ever since Doc had resigned. The former inmates didn't come around much any more on Sunday afternoons to play ball. The home had changed; the kids seemed different; they were getting lax about certain traditions. The micks didn't come around any more. The school teachers were getting old and gone-looking and some of them had already left for good. Anyhow, the former inmates could afford to take on that way; they weren't in the home any more, but the orphans had a new superintendent, who looked as though he was going to put a piece of butter on the table, fire the cook and get new kitchen servants who weren't always cutting their fingers and dipping them in the soup. That was why they were always getting that lousy tomato can soup, so that the orphans

couldn't tell the difference. Well, they showed 'em; they didn't eat it.

The way the kids were carrying on now, one would have believed they were getting all set for first picnic or automobile day. The kids said the new superintendent was going to make some changes that would make the whole home sit up and take notice. Real grub was going to come out of that kitchen, and if Christine, the head cook, didn't toe the mark, they might make her head of the laundry instead, and get Ahnie to do the grub-fixin's. Bread was going to be piled up in platters, and a fellow could take as much as he had a mind to; butter would be high-caked and right on the table before everybody. Salt and pepper shakers were expected any day, so that a guy in the home could dandy up his stew if he wanted to. Fellows were going to be sent out to the city public schools; maybe, they would tear down the old school-house, cut out the demerit system, the Monday goulash, and send all the green-pea hash to the old women's home or to an asylum for the blind. The kids felt as though they had gotten a new lease on themselves; they wouldn't have to starve any more and get Becker's Bakery boils on their necks. There had been too much pukin' goin' on anyway in the home, and Shrimp, for one, who said his appetite had been much better ever since Doc had expelled Herman Mush Tate, said that if the home cut out those Monday goulashes, he'd be a new man and start growing again.

Well, the new superintendent started working and

pretty soon it was officially announced in the prayer hall that those who finished public school would be sent to the city high school. The kids talked about that for weeks and the older guys got speculatin'. Some said the high-school birds would get real lunches, juicy meat sandwiches, to take to school with them, because East Tech was too many blocks off to expect an orphan to go spoiling his stomach running to and from there. Shrimp wasn't so sure about the lunches; if he knew a thing or two about Christine, he went on, she wasn't going to worry her head off getting up packed lunches for a lot of stuck-up high-school bums.

Lorry Lewis went to East Tech; he sure didn't want to go there; it took more guts than he had to believe he could ever go to a school where they went in for pattern-making, wood-turning, sheet-metal business, and be happy. When some kids, on Saturday afternoons, who had nothing to do but sit on their rumps and cut their initials on the playground benches, began that gab about pattern-making, getting your wood planed true to the thirty-secondth of an inch, he almost did it in his pants. He made up his mind then and there nuthin' would ever get him inside a high school that specialized in that kind of inquisition. They made a fellow take pattern-making, whether he wanted to or not. That was what made his ears red.

Well, he went to the superintendent, told him that Mr. Martin could give him manual training references enough to show what he had done with the

lumber around there; why, he told the superintendent, he had broken three lathes in two days, almost lost his hand trying to manipulate the belt; what was more, it was a danger having a fellow like him around a wood-turning lathe; every time he got his wood-turning tools next to the wood, it flew off and hit some one else on the other side of the room in the face or in the eye. As a matter of fact, Prunes couldn't see for a week on account of him. But the superintendent wouldn't listen; he said he had to learn how to use his hands. Lorry got hot over it, wanted to know why he couldn't be sent to Central High where he could take up Latin and Greek, and where manual training was not compulsory. It was no use; the superintendent wouldn't listen; he said manual training would be fine discipline for him, and Lorry said that was all a fellow ever had gotten out of the home, and he thought he was going to be different. Well, the new superintendent wasn't going to take that kind of back talk; he put his foot down, and said that was all there was to it.

He had to go; at least, he would be able to go out into the city now without jumping over the fence. Besides, the high-school kids were going to wear real city clothes: ties, knickered trousers, coats of soft material, a cap, blouses. All that was something. It meant no more of the asylum uniforms: the straight, spider-web grey pants which fell lankly below the knees, the coarse, woolen stockings, the threads of which stood out against his thin, bony legs like dun metal tracks in a railroad yard. Then, too, he would

no longer have to walk through the streets as though he was a sandwich man or a scarecrow twisted around a bean pole for people to stare at and say: "There goes a poor orphan."

Up to his high-school days no one had ever lost any sleep over Lorry; the gals didn't think he was much, and the kids hadn't noticed he was uproariously smart in the schoolhouse. All that they knew about him was that when he was a newcumber he wore tan stockings, a Panama straw hat, and a pink blouse, and that ever since he had been walking around near the edge of the gully, with his hands behind his back. It was plain enough to them, a newcumber who had the nerve to come to the orphanage in a get-up like that could never live it down. He'd always be a nut.

Shrimp was always wondering what the hell fun a fellow could have anyhow carrying on with himself like that. Even Prunes, who never wondered about anything in particular, thought about it once. Mugsy said reading books on the radiator pipes in the playroom was making him daffy, while Pummy, who wanted to make a hit with the captain of the baseball team, said that the trustees had made a mistake about the kind of asylum they meant to head Lorry for from the start. At any rate Lorry was no knock-out with the orphans.

He was a lousy ball player, and if it wasn't for Mr. G., nobody would ever take him on a team. He had worn specs ever since anyone could remember, and was always muffing the ball when his side was about

to win. At first some kids thought he was trying to be funny, but that went on too long, and they thought he was double-crossing them. Shrimp said he was just cross-eyed and clean dumb. Lorry kept out of the way as much as possible. He didn't want to be a side-show for the orphan asylum. He knew he was a punk ball player, and that he was too nearsighted to see straight.

Sometimes he got very blue about it and wanted to break his glasses to bits; but what good would that do? There was no way out; he saw that; he'd never be one of those popular guys in the home. He made the best of it, and often, to get away from their winks and stunt attitude toward him, went off by himself. He snuck away many times, went down the hill, around the bend, and all set up over some taunt at his eyeglasses or peculiarities that they couldn't get at all, he wandered hazily, slowly, his legs jerking forward automatically, as if his motions had been arrested and slowed down eight times by a moving-picture camera. To all appearances he moved in a fagged-out manner over the rocks which rested in the diphtheria stream, like some dirty rain-cloud. He went around the pond, an old rotten raft on it, slugging against the mud like wet, floating rats, as though he was drawing the circumference of a circle. Standing near the Standard Oil tanks, he contemplated the sullen, mute box cars near an oil swamp. Fixedly, he stared after a freight train trundling through the weedy fields. The idea of getting on and riding on its red top, riding through the liberating night—the

night with field shadows, new-mown hay, houses in passing like pasteboard dreams, the cricket-chirping, like the running of train wheels, made him feel as if his body had passed over into the moving box car. The evening was a Montana train whistle through his hair.

At East Tech Lorry began to come up noticeably in English, but the fellows said he was just sucking around the English teacher by writing killingly long compositions. Anybody could do that if he had a mind to and went snooping around the Woodland Avenue branch library the way he did. They all agreed there was nothing smart about that. After the kids put on city clothes and wore a necktie—the fellows called them ropes and anyway they looked like that after the first week—and the gals white middies and blue skirts, some romances on the sly got under way. The home traditions were getting lax; fellows didn't go climbing up so much to the top of the main building where they cut their initials and the date of their confirmation; they didn't look as hard as they used to; they were getting soft and foolin' around with gals.

At least that's what a former inmate, who had gotten out of the home in 1888 had said, when he came for a two days' visit from Denver. There were a few seventh and eighth graders standing about and listening when he made that remark, and Mugsy, who could stick his hand in the fire and pull out a roasted potato without hollerin', said those high schoolers were getting on his nerves with their

neckties and sissy blouses. He said the former inmate was right about them fleas that went to East Tech. Bucket, who was the champeen bread-room swiper in Mush Tate's time, had reformed and went around every day readin' a copy of "Silas Marner" so that all the governors could see how good he was. Mugsy said Bucket was an example of what the home was coming to. To show the former inmate that there were a few real orphans in the world, he got up a maulin' party that night in the big kids' dormitory as a protest against high schools and gals, and swiped a bucket of green-pea hash which they had hauled out of the kitchen.

It was Thursday, green-pea hash day, and as Christine knew a kid would rather be expelled than own up he ate green-pea hash because he liked it, she never kept any watch over it. That night, after the lights were switched off, and the dormitory was quiet, Mugsy, and three eighth graders, and the two biggest guys in the seventh, ducked low in the dark, the sleeves of their nightgowns tied around their heads so that no one could make them out, and came over towards Bucket's bed. One guy, who had knotted a towel and wet it, threw off his blankets, and shot it at his bare legs, while Mugsy, as two other kids held him down and tied him to the bed, smeared green-pea hash all over his face, neck, ears, and dumped the rest of it on him.

Bucket hollered, "Come on, now, I know who you are, Mugsy; I'll report you!"

Those words got Mugsy as sore as hell; that's what

the former inmate meant, he could see it now as clear as day, when he said look at what the home is coming to. He grabbed hold of Bucket's nose, said if he didn't shut up he wouldn't need any more high schoolin'; well, the East Tech kids woke up and Mugsy and his gang had to ditch them by flyin' up to the basketball court in the attic.

After that Mugsy had to lay low; but in the daytime he walked around the playroom talkin' out loud and sayin' that if any guy came near his bed he'd get a horseshoe in his head. For the next few days the East Tech orphans didn't do a stitch of studyin' at night school in the orphanage schoolhouse; there was a lot of low talkin' going on at night school that got Mr. G. all up in the air. Bucket reported Mugsy to Mr. B. all right, but he said it wasn't green-pea hash but something else Mugsy smeared all over his face.

Well, as Mugsy shined Mr. B.'s shoes every morning and swept his room, Mr. B. didn't do much that time, but said he'd fix him up next time if he kept on. Soon as Mr. B. walked away, Mugsy gave Bucket a kick in the pants, and Bucket, who tried to get hold of Mr. B. again, got a sock in the ear by a baseball. Anyhow, the East Tech kids said they were all fed up with the graders. They didn't say nuthin' to Mugsy; that sort of worried him, and he gave the two biggest guys in the seventh grade two agates and two stale jelly rolls from Becker's Bakery.

At the end of the week it got out that Mr. B. was leaving the home and intending to go on the road for

the Gillette Safety Razor Company. Mugsy, who sat at the head of the eighth grade table, said they ought to get up a farewell surprise party for Mr. B. in the big kids' dormitory washroom.

Well, when Shrimp heard that, he asked the fellows to hold off; that was a bit to think about; he didn't have nuthin' in his mind yet, but he said he was thinking. They wouldn't have known anything about it if Mugsy hadn't gone around with his boastin' talk, but that was like Mugsy. He said, trying to get their mouths to water all over, that each kid in the eighth grade had already chipped in a dime, and that they were going to have pop, ham, buns, peanuts, and peppermint sticks.

Well, Shrimp was still thinking, but in the meantime he sent Spunk out to buy a jar of vaseline, and Bonehead-Star-Wolfe, who had come into his own since Mush Tate had been expelled, was appointed to swipe some rope from a hardware store. He came back with the rope, a potato grater, and two boxes of tacks, besides a curtain rod.

Bucket sort of slipped back a little in his reformin' when he heard they were getting up a bit of a mobbing party for dear Mugsy, and came back the next day with a chisel, a hammer, and a saw. That put Shrimp to wondering just what kind of party Bucket was intendin'.

Prunes copped some axle grease from the gardener's stable and a bucket from the hothouse.

After they had ditched all these tools in Bone-

head-Star-Wolfe's chicken coop they felt they were stuck.

Shrimp was thinking how they could get into that washroom after those cock-eyed graders had locked themselves in.

Prunes said there was an axe down in the engine room; that made Shrimp so mad he couldn't even stutter.

Mooty was for fightin' in the open and Bucket said they ought to forget the washroom and lay for Mugsy after it was over and throw him down the hole.

Spunk, who was looking for a feed, couldn't see it that way.

Shrimp finally got up the idea of having a duplicate key made to the washroom, and he sent Bonehead-Star-Wolfe out to do that.

Bonehead-Star-Wolfe was all for going back to the same hardware store; that so disgusted Shrimp that he said it was no wonder he had lost his father and mother, and that they had damn good sense, when they kicked off when they did.

When Saturday night came round, you couldn't hear a pin drop. All the eighth graders marched up from the playroom after the lights had been turned out in the big kids' dormitory, unlocked the washroom, while the commissariat dragged in the bag of eats. The dormitory was so quiet, it looked kinda phony to Mugsy who made sure the door was locked after all the graders were inside.

Mr. B. hadn't come in yet, but was due later.

Then Shrimp crawled out of bed; he sent Bonehead-Star-Wolfe down into the courtyard to start a big bonfire there. He snuck back up again, and a bunch of kids got out of bed and stood at the windows in their nightgowns looking below.

A fifth grader, who thought the kitchen was burning down, ran to Mr. B.'s room, rapped at his door, and yelled: "Fire!"

All the high schoolers took up the chorus.

The fifth and sixth graders jumped into their pants, the lights were switched on, and the eighth graders, who were just starting the preliminary toasts, heard the racket, opened the door, and hearing the yells of the lower grades, said the orphanage was on fire.

A fourth grader, who slept in the little kids' dormitory upstairs, ran down, and said the hospital was catching too. That got the high schoolers a bit pale, and Shrimp looked at Bonehead-Star-Wolfe.

All the eighth graders were about to make a grand dash for the eats which were lying on a long board, on which the tailor used to press clothes, and which was resting on three wooden horses.

Mugsy, who had a cracked voice, screamed out that if any guy did any grabbing, he would knock the — out of him. He then ordered every eighth grader to put on his clothes and march down in order to the court to put out the fire. He then carefully locked and tried the washroom door.

After they were all out Spunk ran to the switch

box, turned off the dormitory lights, and they made a dash for the washroom. They ate up everything, and after drinking up all the pop, they let the water out again into the empty bottles. Then they went out, locked the door, and threw the key away.

Shrimp then sent Spunk down to scout around and make himself noticeable so that no one could say the high schoolers weren't out of the dormitory. Lorry, Bonehead-Star-Wolfe, Bucket, Bah, went down with him.

Spunk came back ten minutes later and said that Mr. B. had sent Mugsy up to the dormitory again and through the halls to see if everything was in order.

Then Mooty tied the rope onto the handle of the bucket which was full of hot water and fastened it from the transom to the knob so that it would turn upside down when the door was opened from the outside.

Shrimp vaselined the doorknob from the inside and outside and then gave it a thick coating of axle grease.

Prunes sprinkled tacks all over the floor of the dormitory.

The bonfire in the court got the new superintendent out of bed. He dressed, fell into his shoes, and with his suspenders hanging down, ran out of the marble hall and down to the court. When it was almost out, he told Mr. B. to hurry up to the dormitory to take charge.

Mr. B., having misplaced his keys, told Mugsy to

look around in the dining room and through the halls to see if any fellows were foolin' about.

A moment later, after Spunk and the other kids had dashed up to get the news to Shrimp, the superintendent this time ordered Mr. B. to take charge of the dormitory immediately.

Mugsy, who was a bit leery about going up to the dormitory alone, took the back way up, tried the washroom door, and finding it locked, and no one about, made for the other door.

Mr. B. ran up the steps, and grabbing the slippery doorknob, came in, and was about to turn around to see what was the matter with the knob, when he got the hot water down his neck and all over his shirt.

Mugsy, who was standing on the inside and waiting to tell him everything was sixes and sevens on the Potomac, almost turned inside out when he saw the bucketful of hotsoaking water splash him up.

Mr. B. who just then remembered, as he noticed the sickish grease on his hands, that Bucket had reported Mugsy not more than a few days ago for the same kinda stunt, reached out for Mugsy's shirt collar, swung him round like a lasso, sopped his mouth with the axle grease, and while Mugsy was trying to explain it was none of his doings, Mr. B. stuck his axle-greased finger down his throat to shut him up. Then Mr. B. went out and returned to his room.

The high schoolers, who up to that time, had been snoring heavily, made for the toilets by threes.

Prunes had diarrhœa all night, and stayed away

from prayer hall Sunday morning, because a certain thanksgiving hymn made him have the cramps all over again.

Lorry finally got into the literary club, because Bucket, who was a member, said it was unfair to keep out an excellent English student like Lorry.

Well, the members who were natty with Indian clubs or always had chief rôles in the commencement exercises, told Bucket to read his "Silas Marner" and not try to corrupt their club with a guy like that. They wouldn't have their literary society spoiled by a fellow who wrote such long compositions as he did. Where the hell would they be anyway if they let him in and he took to reading one of them? No siree, they couldn't afford to take a chance like that. Well, Bucket was not to be put off that way. He went on picket duty at the club till he got a hearing. He appealed to the girls in the society. Then they champeened his cause, and the slick members didn't dare say boo to them.

Lorry was tickled; for five years he hadn't had a chance to talk to a girl. He was slow at first, but when he saw that the librarian, an eighth grader, with a mild coffee complexion and lips full and parting like a split cherry, took to him, he began to open up. She told the others that he was witty, but one literary member who was aces high on the parallel bars said that was all rot. Sitting in seats in the school-house right next to a gal was something far back in him somewhere now; he hadn't thought about gals

since the last time he had sat in the Lyric Theater and heard on the graphophone: "Nothing to do, Nellie, darling, Nothing to do you say, Come let's take a trip on a memory ship, And back to the old school days. . . ."

There was one girl in her first year high school prettier than Muriel. He sat near her in the literary club and couldn't help looking at her small ears peeping out from her hair. He had forgotten that girls had ears. Once he wrote an essay on the revolutionary history of Mexico in a light, breezy way, and she got up after he was done, and said it was original. His eyes, like some emotional elixir, suffused his face with a warm, apple-red pleasure. Her hair had the softness and coloring of pears touched by late noon sunlight, her eyes were "The Question Girl's," and there was always a clean glow about her fingers and gestures and a certain geometry in the way her neat dress draped her knees that made him all moody and made him walk around at the edge of the gully with his hands behind his back. When she left the home, he heard, she went to the University of Washington.

The new superintendent never did anything anybody could recall about giving the fellows more and better grub. The fellows said he wouldn't be old-fashioned like Doc and that soon they would have porcelain dishes on the table, real crockery instead of enamelled tin plates. But the trustees, the home guys had heard, were on the rampage again about cutting down expenses; besides the war had been on now, and although they were all making oodles of

money, making it by the pile, the kids were always being told about the starving Russians when they asked for another crust of bread.

The war seemed to have a direct effect upon the high cost of living in the orphanage playroom. There weren't so many suckers around any more; the little kids who used to bring down their every-other-Wednesday sausages, and sell them to the big guys for a penny each, wouldn't part with them any more for less than three cents apiece. The first and second graders somehow or other got wise to the fact that there was a big war being pulled off somewhere, and they were going to get their prices just like the trustees did. Everybody in those days was preachin' economy, and the governors went around and told the guys they had to eat their fat and that the starving Russians would be tickled to death to have a piece of fat.

Well, at this the fellows put their heads together and Shrimp, as the head of the committee for the starving Russians, got up all the fat there was on the table and put it in the plate and handed it to Mr. B. who socked Shrimp in the back of the ear and immediately left the dining room.

Anyhow, the war was sure bad for the orphans. They got to hoarding up food more than ever and sticking it away in their playroom boxes. Bonehead-Star-Wolfe, before he left the home to join his rich uncle, who was at his best a menace to anybody's good nature, just got on Shrimp's nerves. On Wednesday evenings, when they got biscuits with raisins

in them, Bonehead-Star-Wolfe would slowly and agonizingly nibble away at his biscuit long after all the rest of the kids had finished theirs. Even Mugsy, who used to watch him from the other table, said it wasn't human. Meanwhile he would set his raisins aside with a mathematic precision and nicety that made Prunes' eyes bulge out and pass right over into those individual raisins. Shrimp was downright disgusted and kept egging Prunes on to try something.

Prunes searched his side jacket pocket for a prune pit. He used to save them and crack them and munch the kernels when he was hungry. Then he wet it with his tongue and lower, hanging lip, as he thought that gave it distance and direction. After that he cautiously placed it on the end of a Rogers spoon and waited till everybody was hushed for prayer.

When Bonehead-Star-Wolfe had his head lowered to ask the blessings of the Lord, Prunes let the thick end of his palm come down with a bang on the ladle of the spoon which sent the prune pit whizzing right across the table and caught Bonehead-Star-Wolfe between the eyes. He let out a howl, becoming for a moment uncontrollably careless of those hoarded raisins which the fellows beside and opposite him grabbed and swallowed. When the superintendent came over, Prunes was looking out of the window listless-like.

After he went away Bonehead-Star-Wolfe started to whimper and snivel and Prunes felt sorry and offered him a prune pit to crack and eat after supper.

Lucky for Prunes, said Shrimp after supper, that Bonehead-Star-Wolfe didn't know what hit him, otherwise Prunes' goodness of heart would have been all wasted.

Well, Prunes didn't want to seem so easy and soft and said he would sock him again the next night because Bonehead-Star-Wolfe had to learn to hold on to a bat. Whenever Prunes was playing first base, Bonehead-Star-Wolfe would sling his stick from home plate to first base and twice banged Prunes in the shins. Such weak-minded nuts, went on Prunes, apologizing for his act, ought to be taught something in this world.

"Weak-minded!" whewed Shrimp, eyeing Prunes, and went off.

Prunes did pay Bonehead-Star-Wolfe back one day when that ball player slung his bat all the way from the plate to the pitcher, getting him right on the charley horse. There was nuthin' molasses about the pitcher, and he sailed right into Bonehead-Star-Wolfe about to kill him, when Prunes stepped in and got in the way, and said that Bonehead-Star-Wolfe couldn't help throwin' his bat because he was born that way.

After that Prunes and Bonehead-Star-Wolfe went in whack; Bonehead-Star-Wolfe gave Prunes his Wednesday nights' raisins, his Graham cracker on Sunday nights and a raw egg from his chicken coop every other week.

Prunes in turn told everybody he was in whack with Bonehead-Star-Wolfe and that if anyone

bothered him or tried to suck around his white leg-horns, he would look into the matter. Prunes did look after him; he made him go to the hospital and ask for a pair of specs so that he could blink straight and told him not to fool too much with schoolbooks as that was no doubt the reason his head had gone crooked on him.

Bonehead-Star-Wolfe was grateful, and when his rich uncle took him home, he wrote him a letter, enclosed a two-cent postage stamp, and began with "my dear Prunes," and ended with "now mark my word, my address is 2 Tiffin street, Hamilton, Ohio." Prunes spent the two-cent stamp on jaw-breakers, and when he was confirmed, said he'd never forget Bonehead-Star-Wolfe, even if he should die.

A year later it got around that Bonehead-Star-Wolfe had disappeared.

One Sunday morning the superintendent in the chapel had everybody get up and pray for the soul of Rudolphe Wolfe, who had died in a Denver sanatorium for consumptives.

When America went into the world war, Prunes, an enlisted soldier, and corporal in the American expeditionary forces with Pershing, was killed at the front.

Once while the Slavs in Leningrad were getting almost as little grub as the orphans in Cleveland, Lorry got a slice of bread without any butter on it. It was Sunday, 6.30 p.m., and the supper consisted of an enamelled tin plate of four to six prunes, with

suspicious-looking prune juice gravied over them, three Graham crackers, one slice of bread with butter microscopically brushed over it, and coffee without sugar or milk. Lorry asked the new superintendent himself for a piece of bread with some oleomargarine on it. The kids said anyway it was a crime to call that stuff butter.

The superintendent's meaty lips curled with sudden mobility like the reddish brown paper which encases the peanut. He told Lorry not to make himself a slave of his stomach.

The kids thought that was a good one, and whenever they wanted to get Lorry's goat, they told him not to make himself a slave of his stomach.

Anyway, the superintendent had his good points: he had gotten his education in Germany and believed that the poor orphans ought to have some culture, so on Sunday afternoons, when the moving-picture machine was broke or out of order, some society dame from upper Euclid Avenue, would come around to vocalize for their benefit. Lorry was awfully impressed and was a-rarin' for culture. Even the older guys, like long-legged Mugsy and Mooty, who was cynical, wanted to get a dose of culture.

The first woman who made her début, was kinda fat, but the fellows noticed she wore a black silk dress and that was something culture-like, they thought, and sang "The Ginger Bread Man!"

Mugsy was serious enough all right and blew his nose hard.

Bucket looked awfully taken in and meditatively picked his nose.

Shrimp admitted he was too smart to be a sucker like the others and walked right out of the chapel right under the nose of the superintendent.

That kinda gesture sort of worried Mugsy, and he too started for the door and said he wouldn't be nobody's sucker either.

Bucket's pants were sticking to him, and he got up and stood against the wall. He was thinkin' of Effie Marner, or something; anyway he looked serious.

Lorry didn't budge; he blew his nose in his handkerchief till his face got the color of iodine, and when the prima-donna started to worry a high C in "The Lass with the Delicate Air," the gals began to shoo, because he was coughing out loud and had his bandana handkerchief in his mouth. The governor finally kicked him out, gave him fifty demerits, and the gals were upset and one especially who had good marks in sewing and stenog hisst and said he was rude.

After that performance it was hard to get the kids together to attend those culture-like meetings. Nuthin' good could happen anyway, they said, in the chapel. At last the superintendent himself gave the thing up. He told the orphans they were rowdies and never would get any refinement in them. But the guys said that was all bull, that the real reason he stopped those Sunday singing contests, or whatever they were, was because for once in their lives, they had a hot time and right in the prayer hall too.

One Sunday afternoon, a young gal, all made up and stunning as a vaudeville actress, came down to entertain the orphans. She wore real silk stockings, her hair, soft as summery Euclid Beach air, fell in curls over her back. Some fellows said she had played in Keith's circuit.

Shrimp stuck around till the finish; he was nobody's fool.

Mugsy was happy and romantic.

Lorry was sitting up front and couldn't keep his eyes off her.

The girls were embarrassed and acted awfully quiet-like and uppish, the kids thought. But they didn't have any manners anyhow, they said, those sewing room lunkheads.

The fellows clapped to beat the band; they weren't going to let those gals spoil their party; they were only half orphans anyhow and ought to be sent back home.

Shrimp, who was watching the superintendent out of the corner of his eye and nudging Mugsy who was gaping dumber than usual, said the superintendent wanted to put a stop to the performance but didn't dare to.

The young gal, with a variety dash about her, got terribly encouraged and thought she'd put on the finishing touch to her act. She sang: "Some of these days you'll miss me, honey, Some of these days you'll feel so lonely, You'll miss my kissin', You'll miss my huggin'. . . ."

The older fellows thought that was grand. That's the way life was out in the city.

When she poured out her last line, she sort of straddled, her pretty feet set apart, as though she was on the parallel bars, and coquettishly lifted up her dress, showing a soft, turquoise green petticoat.

The girls gasped and said: "O-o-oo-o. . . ."

The older fellows didn't know whether to look or not, but they looked anyway just to see what it was all about.

Lorry thought her petticoat was swell.

Shrimp, leaving the chapel with Mugsy, passed right under the nose of the superintendent and said right out loud that the performance was absolutely immoral and that such things should not be allowed in a sacred place like the prayer hall.

Mugsy said nuthin' and looked blank in front of him, sort of worried about the superintendent.

Confirmation was set for the second of July; Shrimp had already cut his initials on back of a prayer-hall bench, "Shrimp, Conf. 1917." Spunk had his on the ladder going up to the schoolhouse bell. Mugsy, who wanted to be original, cut his in the stable where the gardener's nag snorted. But Shrimp, who was going to be confirmed in a few days, felt too soft-hearted to say anything. Finally, when they had their blue serges on, with white carnations in their coat lapels, they just giggled at one another. A seventh grader, who still had two years to go before confirmation, danced around them, trilling: "Our

Sunday school is over, and we are going home; Good-bye, good-bye, Be always kind and true."

But those graders were always spoiling everything; anyway, that was just what the home was coming to, Mugsy said pulling up his long pants, tightening his belt, and feeling conspicuously much.

Anyhow, Shrimp, who had learned a thing or two about Abe Lincoln at East Tech, said he was handing around a general amnesty to all the dumb-bells in the orphan asylum. He said "ta ta to all the orphs." Besides, he had a peach of a rôle in the commencement exercises, and had a chance to hold the hand of the prettiest gal in the home while the harmonica club played.

Although Lorry was not in the commencement exercises he almost won a debate in the literary club from a girl who was intendin' to be a lawyer. Everybody said he sure dished out a mean vocab, that would have put a tear in Mush Tate's eye, in the debate: "Resolved that the pen is mightier than the sword."

On confirmation morning, the confirmation kids sat on the top of the benches inside of which were kept the spittin' daubers and shoe polish. They pulled up their long pants, while the little orphs with whom they had been in whack shined their shoes. Then they marched up to the prayer hall; Shrimp didn't care; Bucket was his partner in line; he wiped his shoes on his suit when he wasn't looking.

Bucket said, "Come on now; I'll report you."

Mugsy was feeling so good he gave him a kick in the pants just for good luck.

The superintendent was all slicked up in a bow wing collar and black suit, the cuffs of which fell over his heels. The kids had gotten used to him, and Mooty said he had paid seventy bucks for that suit just to wear it on confirmation day. The superintendent gave them a heart-to-heart talkin' to, and the gals all gotten up in bridal white dresses were snivelling into brand new white handkerchiefs.

Shrimp, who hadn't gone to a city high school for nuthin', said he was going to date one of them up that very afternoon.

Mr. Ring, the organist, played a solo for them. A gal, who typed for the superintendent in the marble hall office, said she had heard he was going to resign after confirmation was over. Some one had it that he was going to play the 'cello at Keith's downtown on Euclid Avenue. When Ring was all worked up he knew his lieder. The fellows had to hand it to him; looking back, Spunk said he didn't know how he would have ever lived through those prayer-hall mornings if it wasn't for Ring. He always had a surprise; and when he rumbled through the "Erlkönig," the kids recited it in the basement play-room for a week. Anyhow Ring looked downhearted; the confirmation fellows guessed it was his tobacco heart. He was past fifty-five, and they wondered if they could ever live that long.

When they marched down from the prayer hall the confirmation kids were kinda blue. Who wouldn't be? said Mugsy, feeling phony inside; gee, he didn't know what had come over him. There was something to that lied, no spoofin'. . . . "Der Winter mag schein, der Frühling vergehn, der Sommer mag verwelken, das Jahr verwehn, das Jahr verwehn. . . ."

CHAPTER VI

CEDAR AVENUE NIGHTS

The fellows were out of the home; they were former inmates now and came back to the orphanage on Sundays to play ball with the kids. They wore long pants, white Arrow collars, with snappy neckties which flirted airily against the wind as they tossed the ball to a seventh grader. Some of the guys, who were helpers on trucks, were getting as much as ten bones a week and came around on Saturday afternoons with striped, silk jazz shirts and the latest cuts from buy-'em-cheaper-from-upstairs-Richman's. They gave a kid a quarter for shining their shoes, but the kids thought they were too sporty, just showing off, and that they acted as though they were too much anyhow.

Lorry didn't come around so much; he was going to school and couldn't afford Stylebilt suits or lisle socks. Besides, lots of girls in his own class came to the home on Saturdays and Sundays, and his confirmation blue serge was already getting to look too shiny at the seat of the pants. He was living with two other classmates, who hadn't been much up on things; they were staying with an old woman off Cedar Avenue in the nigger section of Cleveland. The woman, who kept the place, had been highly recommended to the superintendent. She had swollen ankles, a bloated belly, and diabetes, was always

baking or ironing, so that the parlor always looked like a Chinese laundry and felt like a bake oven. The house was old and musty, and the rooms had a cellar dampness about them. Her son, who worked as a shipping clerk, had bronchitis. The old lady was constantly getting her hair into the soup but was good-hearted and went out of her way to please the boys. When Lorry had an evening off he whiled away the Cedar Avenue nights talking on the front porch or bawling out a song into the elms on either side of the street.

Max, whose father had t.b. and was working as night watchman at a railroad crossing, was sociable enough and liked rolling off yarns about the old days in the orphan asylum. He was light, with Dutch carrotty hair and had a bushel basketful of freckles all over his face that sometimes looked like a stock of corn.

Donald, the other classmate, who had never said much in the home, was a printer's devil now and could get off a melody pretty decently. Later on he scooted, skipped town, some said, without paying two weeks' room and keep. Once Shrimp saw his name in print a few years later but said it couldn't be the same guy who had been in the orphanage.

Max, who couldn't get placed at first, finally got on with Prince and Biederman's, a cloak and suit manufacturer in Cleveland. He had to stack up in high piles rolls of cloth and was all played out when he got home for supper. He didn't like the work, felt he wasn't built for it, because it made him very

sweaty, but the superintendent said he had a future there.

Lorry, who was going to summer high school, found a night job from four to midnight rolling a hand-truck back and forth over the American Express warehouse floor. He worked five to six nights a week, at two bits an hour, and usually spent his Saturday nights if he was off with Max and Donald sitting on the street curb on hot July evenings listening to a negro Billy Sunday do his tabernacle stuff. It was like the old prayer-hall days, and the boys dropped in their buttons when the hat came around.

Sometimes then they would wander around, get a sack of cherries from a huckster, and shoot the pits at alley-cats. On their way back they would blow themselves to a pint of ice cream, scoop it out with pieces of pasteboard from the box, and sing on the front porch in their b.v.d.s: "The bells are ringing for me and my gal." That would get Max into a chatty vein and he would ramble along like a 1916 Ford. Was Werner, the gardener, really the kaiser's bodyguard and how many more weeks would Werner's nag last? Max said he had once tried to ride him, but that the old dobbin was harder than Doc's nails, and that he almost split in two.

"And do you remember," went on Max, spitting into his hands to warm up for another, "how Oscar used to puke all over the school desk when Miss Spitzenheimer, the German teacher, called on him to übersetzen? Oscar was a nut, no spoofin', once when he was in the second grade he asked old man Doc,

when he was giving a Bible class, whether Jesus was a Britisher. Doc was awfully sore, thought Oscar was trying to pull his leg, hauled off and socked him in the kidneys, and the damn fool just puked all over him. Just didn't care whether it was Doc or not. The next time Oscar asked Doc whether the engineer's Airedale rover was ever going to be a horse. Doc took him serious all right and gave him a long lecture on plants and animals. Oscar took it all in, wiped his nose on Doc's coat sleeve, and asked him for two cents for animal crackers. Imagine, that crazy nut, asking Doc for money; he was a new-cumber then and thought Doc was his rich uncle from Minnesota."

"Did Doc come through?" asked Lorry.

"Sure he did," answered Max, "he gave Okkie a kick in the pants and beat it—he wasn't taking chances with that pukin' nut."

"Say what the hell's become of Shrimp?" asked Donald, "he don't come around the home no more."

"And have you heard the latest about Mugsy?" broke in Lorry. "Shrimp couldn't get a job, he's so sawed-off; everybody said he was under age and told him to go back and finish public school. That got Shrimp awful worked up. He's gone back to East Tech and doesn't come around the home for fear the guys will razz him. Somebody said Mugsy was in jail, but I think Shrimp spread that bull, because Mugsy said Shrimp was so small he couldn't do anything if he wanted to. Mugsy's paperhanging instead, helping his old man."

They broke up after the summer months were over.

Max went to live with his father and sister. He had since gotten a half-dollar raise per week at Prince and Biederman's and thought maybe he would stick it out and that perhaps the superintendent was right about his having a future there.

Shrimp quit school, said he wasn't going to waste any more of his time. He finally got a clerking in the offices of a big paper and bag company as a pen-pusher. He put on long pants and gave Mugsy the once-over and said he would never amount to anything but a paperhanger.

Mugsy wanted to mitt him one, but Shrimp, who had Mooty, who had just come to town from Detroit, on his side, told Mugsy to tie the bull outside and to go and hang up Christine's drawers on the line.

Mooty had gone in somewhat for professional boxing, said he had once spoken to Benny Leonard for a moment, and told the fellows hanging around him that Donald was pulling off soap-box orations down on Union Square and that Mush Tate who had become an I won't worker was listening in on a radio in Minnesota.

Mugsy said that stuff was high-tone bull and walked off with Bucket, who was picking his nose, in a huff.

Anyway, Donald had gotten on in the printing game, was a communist or something, and lived in the Bronx.

Lorry got fired from the American Express Com-

pany; the foreman had gone on a rampage, thought the workmen were trying to pull the wool over his eyes. In the early part of the evening Lorry would hand-truck cases and freight from one box car to the other; then he would have to work on the scales, sticking mucilage on labels while the other man weighed in the consignment. At about 9.30 p.m. he would run out to a quick lunch and get a couple of ham and egg sandwiches and a container of hot coffee, sometimes if he had the kale, a piece of lemon or chocolate pie, for the other man and himself. While the foreman was scouting about the warehouse checking up on his men Lorry was missing from the scales. The foreman was taking no chances and looked in the toilet so that Lorry couldn't pull that gag. When Lorry got back he was told to come back next Friday for his check and to take an indefinite furlough.

Lorry was terribly frightened; didn't know what to do; afraid that some of the home fellows would hear about it and spread the news all over. Besides, it was hard to get an after-school job. He was dazed and walked through the downtown streets of Cleveland like an escaped convict. When he had gotten out of the orphanage he wanted to be somebody and already he had been fired; he'd just be one of the fellows of the home about town without a job. He walked down along lower Superior Avenue and looked at the bodies of women as they came toward him, spiraling voluptuously before his filmy eyes. He felt ashamed, but couldn't keep his eyes off them.

He didn't seem to know what had come over him these days. In his last year at the orphanage he began to notice the girls, what they wore, the roundness of their legs, a garter peeping out as they tiptoed to erase the blackboard. Especially, if he hadn't done well at school or had gotten into trouble, had a bad-tasting squabble, he found his eyes wandering over to the girls' benches. He got scarlet as he went over these incidents again and hoped that no girl of the home was walking along Superior Avenue to see what was in his eyes.

At the side entrance of the Statler Hotel a woman talking to a taxi driver saw his face intent upon her. For a moment his eyes had passed over into her thighs, mouth, and breast. She gave him the high sign. He lowered his head and looked around furtively to see if anyone was looking at him, then walked down further on the side street indecisively, not knowing what to do. Around the corner, where the electric lamps were fewer and didn't flare up against his clothes and face, he stopped short, waiting for her, thinking he should go on, and back to the house.

She passed him, slowly, as though she was pulling back a bulldog in leash; "What do you say, kid? Want to have a good time? How about a room at the Gillis? Three dollars for the bed and five bucks for me."

Lorry hardly raised his eyes: he couldn't seem to get the words out of his mouth: "I haven't got that much."

"Make it five altogether; we'll take a taxi. I'll take care of the driver," she followed good-naturedly, sidling up close to him, touching his leg.

He stood still, not knowing she had already gone around the corner for the taxi. Feeling the air bagging against his trousers, he started, fumbled against the street curb, ducked behind a gasoline station, and slunk off into an alley. He exhaled the greasy kitchen smells and carrion of the alley, quickening his pace into a run—with a sense of one who had just gotten absolution from a cardinal sin. Two blocks down he caught an uptown street car on the run, feeling his limbs slice the cool night air. The car racketed along the uptown tracks, carrying the Lake Erie wind, lighted stores, fruit stands, awnings, people doing their late marketing through the open window. His eyes, veiled in a film of reverie, seemed dissociated from the head hanging out of the window, passed over completely into all the objects passing before him, liquefying the buildings, houses, macadam, into impressions.

Lorry hardly came around to the orphanage any more. He had quit high school and didn't want any one to know. Perhaps, too, it had gotten around that he'd been canned from the American Express. Some evenings, loafing up 55th Street, past East Tech and beyond Central High, where the store lights flashed up against the sidewalks and fellows hung around near the new movie palace talking out loud, their laughter cutting through the air, he would come across some guys from the home. They'd give him

the glad hand, want to know where the hell he'd been keeping himself, was he trying to high-hat them, or what, and then go on with shop-talk or try a new jazz-step or tune up on a uke they had with them. They were a jolly bunch, steady workers, got raises every three months, and knew how to pick up a fast jane.

Lorry was not uppish, but just seemed out of it, despite himself. He couldn't put over the small talk, jazz up a conversation with a young sophomore gal or a former inmate pretty kid from the home. He didn't want to play around with whores, take chances, and be down on his back with some venereal disease. They were going to parties, house dances, and having a hot time. Nobody ever asked him along; thought he had gotten bookish and didn't care for girls. Besides, he couldn't make any headway himself, because he was no good at movie flirtations or playing up to a passing girl.

He decided one Sunday afternoon, after wandering through Wade Park alone, it was no use sticking around Cleveland any longer, and that he'd better go on back to the midwest, to Kansas City, Missouri, second railroad center in the country. There were the horse stables, the stockyards, the 12th Street blues, the old timers; Muriel was there, and other grown-up gals, whom he knew as a kid. He could take entrance examinations and matriculate at Polytechnic College there. That would be a damn sight better than fussing around with high-school old

maids and the kind of castrated history they taught there.

After he had made up his mind to leave he couldn't wait to go; but he had to stick it out another week with the Western Union where he had gotten on as a messenger boy at 25 cents an hour to get enough for his train fare. However, he felt a little nervous and queer about seeing his mother again. He was afraid she was getting old-looking, with signs of aging decay about her face and mouth and hair. That always troubled him, his mother decaying under work, her flesh drying up as the years peeled off the fresh skin over her cheeks, leaving something taut and old like a canvas tent pushed in by a rainstorm. That bothered him, and he was afraid for a little to go back. It worried him, as he pressed his face up close to the train window looking out at the farm-fields of alfalfa which swung around crazily past him, like the jerky tickler at Electric Park. He wondered whether the amusement park was still going in Kansas City.

CHAPTER VII

STAR LADIES BARBER SHOP

Lorry got into the Kansas City Union Railway Station late one Saturday night. The city had grown and the new railroad terminal temple was every bit as good as the La Salle in Chicago. He stepped on a street car going downtown toward 8th. The city had spread out; the new Coca-Cola Building was up; other twenty-story structures had been built since he had left. Rubber-tire companies had big distributing offices there now. When he got down near 12th he saw Smeltzer's big sportswear house. An old stockman had once bought him a Smeltzer football.

The town hadn't changed much around there; 12th Street was still a live-wire hangout for the prohibition Kansanites who came over to the Missouri side of the Caw to get their Camels, Saturday night booze, and a piece of tail. The Volstead Act was just being talked about, and the men on both sides of the river were getting theirs while the getting was good. Union wage-earners said that if ever that law was passed by Uncle Sam they would balk; no beer, no work, was their slogan. Maybe, said some of the soberer family men, the saloon ought to be cut out, but it was no use going too far, and letting women's clubs run the country. They only killed business; just look what happened to Kansas City, Kansas after

the state went dry; the only big store they had on the main street was the Woolworth five and ten.

The traffic cop gave the go-signal, and the car racketed down Walnut till it got to 8th Street. With a valise in his hand Lorry hopped off and stood still for the moment in front of where the old subway Nickel Movie House used to be. A high-class haberdashery was located on the same spot now. Across the way was the head of the old 8th Street viaduct, which coasted steep down from Walnut to Main Street and beyond Delaware and Wall, the brewery section, into the attorney's district. Next to the shop was the Electric Oyster House where he used to get a bowl of clam chowder with oyster crackers for a nickel. It was closed till September 15th. Opposite the alley from the saloon was Peck's Quick Lunch. It made him hungry, and he wanted to go right in, like he used to, and order up a chili con carne, and make it hot! One flight up above Peck's was Tisha's mother's place; he wondered whether she was still doing business. She was getting old now, he thought, and perhaps didn't hustle herself any more. What had become of Tisha?

It was 10.30; the train had gotten in at 10.17. A new horizontal electric sign was hanging in front of the place, above the front plate glass: "Star Ladies Barber Shop. You're Next." Everybody was busy, the girls were cutting hair or scraping chins; and a great deal of buzzing around and masher's talk was on, with an occasional laugh breaking through the stuffy air. The electric bulbs ready to pop with the

heat in them made the shop much smaller. The customers waiting in the settees against the wall wriggled about and watched the girls go backshop between jobs, listening with horsy interest to the toilet being flushed.

Lorry came in unnoticed; they were all new hired help. The nigger porter who was busy brushing and turning up the cuffs of a customer in a chair, jumped up to grab Lorry's valise, and then went back to his seat on the shoeshine stool popping up his flannel rag against the brogue of a customer whose breath smelled of Life Savers and who tipped well. "Iz that awl rite sah, mistah Willyum?" he asked grinning and blowing his hot breath against the left shoe to give it the finishing touch.

Up front a stumpy, heavybuttocksed, seventeen-year-old girl was giving the man in the chair a close shave, running her shiny, manicured nails across his blueish bearded face with an "O.K., sir?"

"You bet," came back the man, passing his hand through her hair, a yellow drug-store dye and slapping her buttocks in a joshing-like way, "Yer all there, kid, and then some."

"Here, don't get fresh," she jestingly said, wielding her razor. "You really tickle me to death, just too funny for words," she aired, giving him a return to something near and confidential he had shortdistanced to her, at the same time making a cute mouth for an impatient steady against the wall.

"Shure wish I could, lady," gestured the customer in the chair.

Two fellows, standing up in the rear of the shop, who had just straggled in from the saloon next door, guffawed.

"Yur next right away," said the girl who worked on the front chair and drew in trade, looking over toward Lorry who was leaning against the cold radiator.

"I'm just waiting for my mother, thanks," answered Lorry.

"So yer Lizzie's boy," she said, "she's just went round the corner to the Dago fruit stand with a customer. She'll be right back any minute. Sit down, won't you?"

Lorry went into the back of the shop. The old, rusty gas range was still there; on it were some round black pots, the sides of some bent in; the toilet water was running; it never did flush right, his mother used to say. A roach crawled across the fly-speckled, white plaster. On the table was a bit of frayed, greasy oilcloth, a loaf cut jaggedly, partly by knife, on the other parts thumb and finger depressions could be seen.

His mother came in; he heard her voice: "Oh, my sonny-boy here?"

She came back.

He kissed her several times and she said: "Lorry, how awful thin you got."

"Yes, I suppose, mother. Shall we sit down? You must be tired."

He looked at her while she opened up and told him what had become of the old-timers who used to

work for her. He warmed up at this and would break in at intervals to say: "But mother, what ever in the world did become of Laura, and Mary, and all the others?"

"Poor Laura, I always told her to be careful, she went back to her hubby in Salt Lake, but she ran around too much. And a man won't put up with that sort of thing, you know. Well, she got herself mixed up with a rounder, tried to give him the air after she had sucked all the money out of him. Oh, the papers was full of it. He shot her and blew his own brains out too."

"And Mary," she went on, absorbed in a thoughtful pause, while rolling a crumb between her thumb and finger, at this she laughed as if it was the only thing one could do, "got hitched up with the saloon-keeper next door. He kept her for a while and then they took out a license. He got her diamonds and a set of furniture for two thousand, I don't remember how much. Mary knew how to work him all right. Her other fellow, do you remember him sonny? was a dandy, straight little man, faithful as a dog; he was all cut up over it. He came to me and cried and cried, said he had been so devoted to her. I warmed him up some tea and told him not to take on so, that there was always other pebbles on the beach. He gave her some beautiful cut-glass for a wedding present and then went out to take care of his old mother in Tulsa. Somebody said they struck an oil gusher on their land, and now all he has to do is to

sit and wait for his income. I suppose that didn't tickle Mary so."

"And what about Henry Smith, mother?"

At this her mouth, already sagging over her yellowish, parchment skin, dropped. "What's the use of talking about the past?" she answered, "what's past is past. He got awful close and as fussy as an old maid. He wanted everything just so. I was getting sick and tired of it; I saw there was no future in it for me. Anyway, his sister-in-law in St. Louis wrote me that he was running around with a chippie in New Orleans; so I wrote him to keep on boarding there, that I didn't want him. He wrote me and cried in his letters like a baby, but I didn't give him no respond. He'll never be anything but a steamboat man."

They went on in this vein over a couple of limburger sandwiches and a glass of Budweiser. Ghizella, he heard was a street-walker in Chicago. Bud ran off to Portland, Oregon, got a young girl in the family way. The mother and the girl followed him clear out to the coast, located him; he was running a little news stand on his own, and taking care of poor Lucy, his mother. He had to marry the girl. "No matter what he did," she rambled on, "he always stuck by his mother. Lucy, you know, had Indian blood in her; sometimes she was crazy for a man. She's not just right. Gladys was out that way one summer; she opened up a shop in Seattle; she wrote and told me Bud waited on his mother hand and. . . ."

"Lizzie!" the girl on the first chair sent through to

the back shop, "come here and make change and give that son of yourn a rest."

She went out front.

Lorry slipped out through the back screen. The alley clotted with mud, night and the spud-cans of grease from Peck's Quick Lunch was spread out like a broken spider web. He stumbled over a rat-trap, and backed away, his hair stiffening spikewise. Leaning against the brick wall of the building which stuck into the alleyway, his eyes stared over toward the circle of September insects about the electric lamp which threw a signal flare straight up to the doorway of Tisha's mother's place. There was nobody out front; no one could remember that anyone ever was. The old-timers knew about it; besides the house was well enough recommended. The cops never bothered the joint; the last patrol wagon that was seen in front of Tisha's mother's house was back in 1909 on election night when everyone got all boozed up.

"Hell's bells," said the saloonkeeper next door, "who wasn't off his nut that night? But you can't tell me a single fellow who ever caught anything there. She keeps her outfit as clean as a pin."

One story above his head Lorry could see the whorish red wallpaper, two twenty-five watt bulbs, almost dead, against it, making it look like a theater curtain dimly lighted up. The shades were half-drawn, and inside somebody had his hands up a woman's dress.

Coming through the alley, Lorry heard what he

thought was a familiar "come this here way, Johnny boy." An old switchman, who had been patronizing the house for years, was hobbling behind with a union tin of beer in one hand. He seemed pretty well shot, and as Tisha went up the back way, the railroad-hand feeling his way through the dark, tried to kiss her going up the steps.

Lorry walked on down the alley, stumbling along, till he came to the Grand Opera House. He swung himself up onto the platform, which seemed to have diminished by well over a half in size since 1911. The umbrella factory across the way was out of business; from the basement there came the smell of unrolled tobacco leaves. The carpenter shop was torn down. The theater had not opened up yet for the season. Nat Goodwin, who used to play here years back in traveling musical burlesques, had just died in his room at the Baltimore Hotel along the swell upper 12th Street section up around Wyandotte.

Lorry got down after a while, walked around the block, down 7th to Main Street to see if the Penny Arcade was still there. Some kids, hanging around and spitting at one another to pass the time away, tried to get the stranger's goat. Each one came up to him, one after the other, and asked him what time it was. After he had absent-mindedly answered three times that he didn't know what time it was, one fellow hawed, and the rest followed. He walked off, crossing over to the street corner, a beebee shot whizzing by his ear.

Underneath the viaduct a crowd was gathered in

close around a street-faker. Lorry got in among them. He had a few lines which he alternated, prefacing each novelty with a sleight-of-hand trick, and pulling the card out of a bystander's ear. This got everybody in a good humor, and he started to pass out an ointment that was guaranteed to remove grease spots from suits, destroy dandruff, or put a high polish on your shoes. This he yelled was absolutely free of charge. He wasn't looking for any suckers, no siree. You could return it if you wanted to, take it home to the baby, or give it to your mother-in-law with absolute safety. Perfectly harmless. Won't set the house afire. Better than asbestos. A godsend in every home, gets you on the good side of the little wife. With each box of ointment there comes a genuine, hit-between-the-eye Arkansas diamond, for only four bits. Take any jeweler, Tiffany's, I don't care who, and he can't tell the difference.

"Blow yerself to four bits on a genuine rock-bottom, cut any piece of plate glass, don't care how thick it is," he screamed, passing them out in a hurry, biting the half dollars between his teeth as they came in, "and sock away the rest of the coin for that little farm. Genuine, honest-to-goodness, Arkansas sparkler, harder than Pike's Peak. If you're in jail, you can cut yourself out. If the wifie is blue, sick, or down with indigestion give her one. Yes sir, it would cheer Ingersol up. Yep, I've read in my day."

"Now," he continued, after the boom had settled into the cobblestones, and seeing some straggle off,

"don't go off, come on in closer, I've got something here," he motioned them in more, dropping his voice to a confidential whisper, "that beats old harry for mischief. For those of you who like a little pastime, want to play a joke on the neighbor's wife, or," he screamed at the top of his voice, and then without giving notice, abruptly dropping it like an express elevator, as he came to the important point, "if you want to know whether the wife ain't fiddlin' with a traveling salesman, while you're keeping up the old homestead by the sweat of your groins, I have a little periscope here, just the thing. Don't need a Pinkerton or a Burns Agency. Place it up against the keyhole, press either your left or the right eye, whichever is the best one, up to the delicate instrument, and peek for all you're worth. Better than a radiolite, beats a dictaphone, and is miles ahead of the wireless. Step right up!"

This went over, and after that was done, the faker closed his bag hurriedly and beat it as somebody in the crowd said a cop was coming.

At two in the morning Lorry went home with his mother to the flat on 8th Street. The brass bed in the alcove was there, the bits of frayed rugs were strewn on top of one another, receiving their daily round of dust from the post cards on the tin wire tacked against the cream buff wall. Lorry laid the basket on the kitchen table and went to bed on the cot in the parlor.

Lorry told everybody he had graduated from high school; he was almost eighteen and was ashamed to

go back and finish his senior year. He couldn't make up his mind what he wanted to do, so for the time he went around to look up the gang. In front of Mawx Stedna's livery stable he ran into Emery who had sort of grown out of himself. They said hya. Emery had to recollect for a moment and couldn't quite get Lorry straight in his mind. However, he didn't mind taking up with him and told him he was giving old man Mawx a hand unhitching the teams at night and running them into the stalls below. Lorry remembered Mawx Stedna all right; he used to patronize the shop and bring transient stockmen around on Saturday nights. They were usually good for big jobs, and Lizzie showed her appreciation by giving him an extra-good massage and a free-of-charge scalp treatment. She still had some of the old strength in her fingers and rubbed down the four-bit spot on the crown of his head that was getting worrisomely slick-looking. Mawx was a good-natured skate, was still making a mint of money shipping horses out of Texas by the carload for the government.

Horses had gone down to hell on account of the Ford, but Mawx Stedna had stuck to his livery stable, said he wouldn't change it into a garage if he lost everything he had. The war came along; Uncle Sam needed him then all right; he knew horses and sent some of the finest appearing western ponies into training camps that anybody could breed in America. The government appointed him an inspector so that he had things pretty much his own way. He was

honest, wanted the U.S.A. to win the war, but didn't see why he shouldn't get his.

Mawx Stedna had started out as a blacksmith, had a forge and young helper off Admiral Boulevard long before they tarred and put even cubic blocks on it. That was way back in 1907 or 8 when it was simply named 7th Street and the Paseo seemed like the outskirts of the city. Kansas City was still raw then.

Lorry remembered when the Boulevard was first laid and grass planted up to the curb and next to the sidewalk. Then young saplings were stuck in the ground and people said that Kansas City had the largest system of parks in the country. Realtors started an advertising campaign in the *Kansas City Star*. Everything that was big went into the *Star*, because Teddy Roosevelt was a close friend of the owner and wrote editorials sometimes for it. They ran a whole sheet in the Sunday's rotogravure, which was already becoming more important than the funny sheet. Builders were throwing up uniform frame two-story houses on either side of the Boulevard. Everybody got to talking about Admiral Boulevard, mentioning how cool it was in the evenings, just like out in the country, fresh air from the trees. It was a pleasure to have your windows open.

Suddenly Lorry, coming to, started to laugh all over and tried to get Emery to remember him by telling him how one night he went down to Admiral to choose up sides with some niggers who lived off Charlotte Street. Emery was there too, and his big

sister Violet stuck around for a while. She was already wearing silk stockings and fellows looked whenever she pulled them up. But she went off pretty soon, because all of the guys didn't show up. She said she was dated up anyway. One kid, who was nuts about her said that was all bull, but Violet, just picked up her dress, stuck out her behind at him, and strutted off.

Anyway, they were horsing around the vacant lot where they used to fool with a raft in the muddy water after it had rained hard. Two nigger kids were playing mumble-peg with a hunting knife in the grass. They hollered to Emery and Lorry to come on over. Emery, who was never in any hurry about anything, he just wasn't particular, joined them later. They were all squatted on the grass, which had been cut short, just like a feather-edged haircut Lorry's mother turned out in her shop. They were at the top of a steep slope. One of the colored boys who was always in things said let's play "I dare you do this." Emery wasn't losing his pants over the game, but that was like Emery, he was never interested in anything except taking a krap; at least that's what the 8th Street newsies said whenever he came around in his overalls with his Lexington Missouri sort of cake-walk talk.

"What's the dare?" Lorry wanted to know.

"I betcha a shoeshine against yer clean white hankerchiff ya can't roll down this here baby bluff with yer eyes tight shut."

"I betcha yu can't," hollered back Lorry.

"All right, Lorrie, white boy, if I do it, willya folla the leada?"

"It's a go," said Lorry.

The colored boy went down and came up as smooth as a herring. Then Lorry started to pull off his black, brand new overcoat his mother had just bought him that afternoon from Gordon and Koppell's. They were a classy house, and his mother had spent a pile of money on him for it.

"No fair," said the coon helping him on with it, "I done went down with mine on."

He then pulled Lorry over to another spot. "Yu roll down this here spot. I'll put a hankerchiff round yer eyeballs so yu can't see nuthin'."

Lorry didn't like the idea of the handkerchief; but Emery said for no reason at all, what did he have to do with it anyway? "Aw, Lorry, don't stawl."

They tied the handkerchief tight around his eyes; then they told him to lie down flat on his back, cross his arms like he was dead in a coffin, then they rolled him over several times till he reached the bottom and went into the curb. Lorry then got up, yelled out, "Hurraa-aa I win, nigger boy, you gotta shine my shoes fer a week!"

"Shure, yu done won all right, poor white trash. Kum aroun to my alley an' I'll klean yu all up, shoes an' everything."

The two little niggers pulled a Golddust Twin trot and yowled like two back-yard cats. Emery had a sort of yellow grin on his face, as though the yolk of an egg had been smeared over the upper part

of his lip around his chin. Lorry then became somewhat suspicious and craned his neck around to see if they had pinned a "kick me hard" sign on his back or something. At this the two coons almost busted. Lorry's black, brand new coat was smeared all over with muck. He looked like a paperhanger. The two niggers rolled over on the pavement, screaming. Lorry made a sick face and then began to cry, said he would tell on them, get the 8th Street gang to clean them up. They thumbed their noses at him and ran off, their bare feet ragging against the paved walk like a worn-down broom. Emery got up and went home. That night Lizzie gave him a hell of a licking and said if she ever caught him playin' with niggers again she'd tan his young hide till he was black and blue.

After Lorry had rolled off that story Emery came out of it, a pale ochre grin on his mouth, said sure enough if it wasn't Lorry. Thought he had died of scarlet fever after they had took him to the city hospital; that's what Morris Stedna whom they used to go around with together told him back, when was it? somewhere in 1911, if he recollected right.

"What's become of Morris?" queried Lorry who used to wonder about him when he was in the Cleveland orphanage.

"Aw, helps his old man, tears around in a swell Ford sedan, and hangs around at nights at the Gillis stagedoor, waitin' fer those there burlesque whores in tight's to strut out. He's been layin' too many of them. Now he's down on his back with water on the knee.

Old man Mawx is awful set up about it and his maw who's an invalid is cryin' herself sick over him."

The old man, who had been around since his son was down, was all broken up about it. He kept away as much as he could from the stockyards. The hoss swoppers said the old man was taking it hard, went around like a street puppy with his tail between his legs. When he had to talk, he said his boy had gotten a touch of rheumatism and water on the knee, but that he was getting along all right, and would soon be up and around.

Lorry went down with Emery into the horse stalls to get the feel of straw and sawdusty manure against the soles of his shoes and around his ankles and the smell of the stable pressing his nostrils wide apart. Emery patted slowly the hind of a mare in the next stall feeding at the bin and lackadaisically swished away a hossfly with the frayed end of a halter. His sister, he said, had teamed up with an auto mechanic and had three kids, and his maw and paw were still hittin' it off at the same shanty. Rent was getting purty stiff and the old man couldn't get around much. He said he wuzn't goin' to get hisself hitched up to no one; because you get tired of drivin' away at the same hole all the time. After that he relapsed into silence, sleepily stared at Lorry, who looked kinda high-tone to him. They said hya and Lorry straggled off into the Dago section about the old rock-ribbed courthouse.

A huckster was yelling: "Watermelon, mellun, mel-lun." He stopped to get a slice from him. There

was a big watermelon on ice in a glass case which he peddled on the side to the kids. Stabbing into it with a sucking relish he only half finished it; the smell of Dago garlic and a four-year-old —— in the street on his shoes took the stomach out of him. He called the little —— over to him and handed him the rest of it. Lorry then moped about 12th Street till midnight, watching the Kansas City chippies soliciting. A pimp in front of a pool room came over to him and asked him if he had a match and then wanted to know on the sly if he wanted some hot stuff for only two bucks a shot. Lorry thanked him and went off.

CHAPTER VIII

THAT RACEHOSS BLADDERS

There had been nothing in the *Kansas City Star* want ads for Lorry. For a week or so he thought he'd become a taxi-driver. He didn't know how to drive a car, but he would take lessons from a fellow he knew, who drove a moving van. Of course, he had forgotten the city pretty much, especially the residential parts, Country Club and the Swope Park exclusive sections, but he'd get on to that soon enough. As a taxi-driver he could get eighteen per week and a fair rake-off on the side. However, his mother didn't like the idea; she said that taxicabmen were tough; so he had to hustle up some other notions to get on his feet and help his mother out.

Then there was a route open on the Missouri Dairy and Creamery Company; they had their own farm and a big plant on Locust Street between 11th and 12th. A lunger, who had to take his family with him to Los Angeles to get into a warmer climate, was anxious to sell his route right away. He heard that he would sell out for a song, but Lorry said he didn't have that much, and he didn't know how he could raise the money, as his mother was pretty short. Well, he would have to work up some other ways of getting on, but no matter what, he'd rather be around horses or on the outside than be a penpusher with some clerk with cancer and a stinkin' breath over

you all the time. No time clocks for him; he wasn't made that way.

Finally he got on in the Kansas City Stockyards as a drover. Mawx Stedna used his pull to get him in. Mawx said it was no job for a high-school grad; certainly no future in it for a bright lad like Lorry, he persuaded, but Lorry said he knew what he was about and that all that talk about a future was the bunk. He wasn't going to be taken in with that bull. Mawx saw that there was no use arguing; Morris was like that too, he added, didn't care for an education, just wanted to be around horses. Now it was cars; always some crazy fad.

Lorry had to get up every morning about 4.30 to be down at the stockyards at a quarter to 6. The hours were long, from 6 to 6, and often overtime without pay, but one could take a nap when cattle herding was quiet. Besides, one could stall, get off by himself, take your damn good time rounding up the cows and bulls, driving them from one pen to another, opening and shutting gates, straddling bars, cracking the hind of a bull on top of a cow, saying hya to a transient stockman down for a few days from Portland—all that till you had the livestock, making sawmill noises, on the cement floor of the slaughterhouse. He never stuck around the slaughterhouse, at least he never went beyond the guest vestibule. He didn't want to see what he knew happened to them.

In the evenings when he got home he was all in and not fit for anything else; it was hard on his

mother too, because she had to shake him awake, get his breakfast, and make a little something for his lunch, a couple of hamburger sandwiches with a big dill pickle, homemade cookies baked the night before, and hot coffee in a thermos bottle. His mother had a time, she said, getting him up when the alarm clock went off; he always wanted to sleep just a few minutes longer. She hadn't the heart to say no. Sometimes he overslept himself and had to sneak in. He would get into the antechamber of the slaughterhouse, come back with a hossdealer, pretend he was giving him a hand, and then carry on as usual, lashing a long stick with a "gee, haw" at the scurrying cattle.

The eighteen dollars per Lorry got looked good to his mother; it helped her considerably; she needed it; business wasn't picking up as it should now that fall was coming on; but she complained, said she was getting no sleep at nights. Her bladder was bothering her, said she was ruptured somewhere inside. She got that from reaching up to cut hair under those electric lights. Dr. Henry said she ought to have a vacation. That was easy enough for Dr. Henry to say; she had a pocketful of money; but she couldn't leave the shop to those little chippies. As it was they were always ringing up "no sales" after a big job; they gave the customer change out of the cash register and stuck the rest into their apron pockets. They were good for that all right. Once or twice she had caught them red-handed; but she had to pass it over, what could she do? It was too hard

finding steady workers. Breaking in apprentices from the barber's college was no picnic.

A couple of times every month she went down Main Street past Heckel Bros. Barbers' Supplies nodding politely to Mr. Heckel himself when he was standing in front of the door, almost to 5th till she came to the college. Oftener than not they had no new girls; sometimes she had to take in an old hen who wanted to learn the trade, and they were no show for the shop. At first she would stick them on the fifth chair right next to the partition in back, but in the long run they were usually better help than the spring chickens from Joplin. They meant business; were out for earning a respectable living. Of course, men liked to have a young one working on them, but she had such rotten luck with them. They weren't very dependable. She would take in a girl just out of barber's college, teach her how to shave, she didn't want any chin scrapers in her shop, show her how to put out a haircut that they could only get at the Star Ladies Barber Shop, and give her a hint or two on how to meet customers with refinement, and how to work the trade. Then as soon as the girl learned the rounds she would go off to some other shop on 12th or just use the shop long enough to find a rounder who would keep her. That was her thanks; she wished she could get out of that rotten shop. Wechsler, a little German fellow from Colorado, told her long ago to clear out. He was willing to teach her optometry, which he practiced on the side; he said she would pick it up in about

six weeks; then she could be somebody, not a lady barber. Of course, it was too late now; one had to have a license and a real education. Before, with a little pull and a smear, you could take out a state license right away.

Well, at any rate, no one could say anything against her character. Cromwell, the commission-house man and a city alderman for years, always told her that she was one hardworking, noble little lady. If she didn't have to keep such long hours, she could still go on until her ship came in. When she was younger she said she was as strong as an ox and opened up the shop every morning at 7.30 on the dot to get the rush trade just before office hours. Then she never closed up till 10 every night; sometimes a late customer, with a bag in his hand, just come from the Union Station, would drop in and keep her till 11. She never turned away a customer. That was her motto. Now when 7 came around, she was ready to clap to pieces, as she put it; before she assorted the towels, counted up the checks to see if they tallied with the register ring-ups, turned off the fans, and locked the shop, she saw stars before her eyes. For the last two months she was taking osteopathic treatments, didn't know what she would do without them. They were the only things that kept her on her feet.

Well, if God would help her, perhaps she could still sell the shop, take it easier, and become a real-estate agent, do a little speculating. It was no use, you could only make so much with your ten fingers

and not one penny more. She should have seen that long ago and not slaved night and day, without a bit of sunshine, as she did. All her sweet youth blown through the window and for what? It didn't pay; she could by this time have something; but she was afraid to take chances. If she lost, who would help her? You didn't find money in the streets. If you had a pocket full of money everybody was your friend, but if you were down and out nobody recognized you. Oh, well, she went on, God would help her and everything would come out all right.

In the afternoon when hoss swopping was running high outside of the stockyards opposite the blacksmith or in the sawdust ring where nags shot with arsenic were trotted around for the benefit of greenhorns just breaking into the hoss game, Lorry would slip off, without being noticed, and stand around and watch the auction.

Mawx Stedna, who a short time back never missed a real hoss-swopping party, which had more pep than a crap party, didn't come around so much now on account of his son, Morris. However, it was too much of a temptation for him to stay away altogether. He could still be seen cracking his whip, blowing his nose into the dust, and getting what he called a hell of a kick out of those two penny peddlers, trying to size up a pony when they didn't know a mare from a horse. He came around more for the sporting excitement of it than anything else.

Mawx liked getting together with some of the old-

time cattlemen who also dropped around to see cronies and watch a lame nag with eight days to live, not barring bad weather, swopped off for a good wagon or sold for real Uncle Sam dollars. Although Mawx never dabbled in such small fry, except to outbid a rival or for gambling pastime, he always had an eye open for a sucker who didn't know whether he had his pants on or not.

Mawx would stand aside and egg on some fool buyer who was tearin', he roared, to part with his money. The experienced hossdealers would lay side bets as to which peddler would outbid the other.

Once a huckster, a lousy loudmouth, is what Mawx called him, who had been knocking Stedna's livery stable as well as his business principles, because a horse he had bought from him one winter took sick and died on him two months later, put one over on the old fox. Mawx spied him one afternoon in the sawdust ring bidding for a mare that Mawx smelled right off was as blind as a bat and just about ready for the mucilage factory. Mawx Stedna got another stockman to go and boost up the bid skyhigh. Then when he felt the huckster was about to bust, Mawx told him, to step out and let the sap have his couple of barrels of live-soap.

Two old codgers, who had been within earshot, came right over to get in on the doings.

Skinny, who had cowpunched and played Yukon in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and become a backwater since the war, said he'd put up ten bucks that the

peddler would back out on the first rise and stick old Mawx with the mare.

Well, that got things started. Mawx took to the idea right off and came back with a ten raise. Some other stockmen stepped in to get their mitts into some idle kale.

Bill Moose—one hossdealer said he was named after a lodge—was doing the boosting for Mawx; he took out a roll of bills from his hip-pocket and said he'd give Mawx a hand standing off all comers.

Well, Mawx rolled out a mean wad of greenbacks too; he was not to be outdone; he was willing to take them all on.

The next few minutes fired by; the auctioneer's hammer no sooner touched the board than that mountain-mule of a peddler came forward with a counterbid putting Bill in his place.

Well, ole Moose, who never stood out of nudging reach from Mawx, wasn't as hot on running that ape-head up on the bid and taking the chance of Mawx getting that stuffed animal, as he was of trying to coin a neat pile for himself on the side. Bill knew that thing couldn't go on forever and kept passing him the lowdown to quit while the quitting was good.

Mawx just didn't hear him; he was tickled silly; blue in the face. The other hoss swoppers were bustin' with hilariousness and kept coming back with steeper bets. Mawx blew his nose all over his boots and went them twenty better.

Bill, afraid the peddler would catch on, looked

worried, and got over to Mawx on the q.t. to put in twenty for him too, and then had to hurry back into the ring.

The auctioneer was getting slowed down considerably, his hammer moving down with less frequency, like a referee before he counted out the ten; the huckster was looking all jawboned, and wondering each time why he didn't quit. He reckoned there must be something to that mare if an oldtimer like Moose wanted her; besides it would give him some standing maybe, if he put it across him. When he saw Bill's raise and went over him again, Bill said it was high time to lay down whether Mawx liked it or not; he had too much money up as it was to spit in fortune's face just because Mawx wanted to pay off a grudge.

But Mawx, his eyes a round tin of sudsy water, poked him out with his belly, "One more raise! Then let the sucker have the whole works!"

Skinny, somewhat of a sharper, said fifty he don't take it.

Mawx took him up.

The others were gettin' a little leery and kept back.

The bid had already trebled what the peddler had before considered a bargain. He sort of felt hazy about things but didn't have time to think matters through for himself. That auctioneer, hammering away at him, dinning in his eardrums, didn't give a fellow a fly-by-night second to ruminate a half

minute's worth. Suddenly he jumped out of it as though some one had put a tack on his bottom.

Some one at his side, who didn't seem to be horsing him either, jabbed him: "Come out of it, simp! Hell, man, are ye as blind as that there mare yer screwed on buying? Look over thar if ya wanta smell something."

For a moment the huckster thought he was trying to pull his leg and get him out of the running so that the other fellow could get the hoss; but then he woke up as though a bucket of well-water had been dashed on him and looked over on the sly towards Mawx's direction. He knew the hossdealer at his side, had heard often enough that he and Mawx were always at one another's throat. Well, now he saw how the land lay; so it was Mawx Stedna, that crooked puppy who palmed off wheezy mares on honest folk, who was behind it all. He was wise now. Then he went on as though nothing had happened. When the mare hobbled by, kicking up her hind legs like a prima donna at a farewell performance, he sort of warily passed his hand past the mare's eyes, as though shading his blinkers from the sun.

When Bill Moose caught that out of the corner of his eye, he almost had a fit. That mule knew now, no use reckoning himself out of it, and he had already raised him another fiver. It was no good either going back to Mawx; he'd only noise in your face. Well, it waren't to be none of his sweatin' groins if that cow'sass went down on his haunches and left Mawx with a mare that was good for nothing but

feedin' and pissin'; but he recollected how deep he was in it to that sharpshooter Skinny.

The auctioneer paused for a moment looking for the usual counter from the huckster, but he didn't budge the bid a copper.

Mawx, who was hawking up something from his throat with tears in him, was paying no attention. The auctioneer's voice coming in with a "go-in-gg, gaw-aw-ing" went out with a final "gaaw-awn!"

Before Mawx came to, he heard the hammer smack down on the tableboard. The mare was his at a fancy price, and he owed four hundred and fifty berries besides.

Bill Moose, walking out, stepped on Mawx's worst corn, guttering, "Now, bitchin' fool, pay fer me!"

The stockmen, all red and splitting inside, stuck around Mawx like summer flies till he signed over a few National Bank of Commerce checks to them.

The huckster said he wasn't through with Mawx Stedna yet; told an axlegreaser who worked for Mawx that he would keep a watch on him and that he better treat that mare of his'n right or else he'd see that the law got after him.

Mawx was first for caving him in; but he said he wouldn't stand up like a man, not that — potato-peddler; and, what was more, he couldn't afford to have his good name dragged into court. But anyway, he had better not set foot in his livery stable.

Mawx's mare got to be a standing joke with the hossdealers at the stockyards; even his friends winked and asked how his mare's bladder was doing.

If they could do anything for her, they'd be Johnny-on-the-spot. Always a lady's man, they poked at him.

Mawx almost got into a fight one afternoon; they kept horsing him till he was ready to do the splits backwards. He spat on his hands, doubled up his fists, and said if anybody mentioned that mare to him again he'd send them to the manure heap for good. Then they moved around behind his back, sawed off his suspenders buttons with a pocketknife and talked innocent-like about floating kidneys and urinary specialists. One fellow, who made sure of his distance first, called back to Mawx through the gate and hollered that if piss was as high as gasoline he could make a mint of coin out of that mare of his. Mawx saw that it was no use and went off.

He had never played the goat before and tried hard to scheme ways of making that mare pay. At first he thought of auctioneering her back, no matter if he had to suffer a small loss. When his son Morris heard of it, he went up in the air. Did he want to make a circus of himself taking that mare down to the stockyards with him? If those hossdealers found out he was going down there with that mare, they'd come down with a brass band to meet him. Well, Mawx was glad he hadn't fallen for that.

Then one day he tried hiring her out by the day to a huckster; but the fellow came back before the morning was over and told Mawx he would sue him for damages on account of that mare. His whole day was lost. No honest man had a right to rent a mare that stopped every five minutes to relieve herself the

way that Bladders did. Bill Moose happened to be about when that one was spilled, and although Mawx stood half of old Moose's losses, he still was sore inside him about that, and it wasn't long before the stockyards got enquiring with overmuch concern as to how Bladders was managing to hold herself these here days.

If it wasn't for that peddler who had it in for him, Mawx would have shot the mare right then and there, but he knew if the thing ever got out into court, he might lose his license. The veterinarian said the mare was all right enough, blinkers bad of course and a little weak on the drivelling side of her. The mare lived on, fed right well on the feed bag, and was as gentle as they come. Emery took quite a fancy to her, although she was always getting him in the eye. Mawx finally sold her to an iceman for fourteen dollars and told the stockmen that although the mare was on in years, weak and batblind, he had found out that she had pedigree and had shipped her west to a ranch for breeding.

The stockmen all said "oh my yes" and sometimes on lazy hossfly afternoons enquired after that race horse, Bladders.

CHAPTER IX

HARRY COEN'S HIGH CLASS BAKERY

About this time Lorry's mother took ill; she went to pieces. Dr. Bloy, a general practitioner, who had gone in for surgery lately and had a big practice on 12th Street, said she had to have an immediate operation. There was something coming down inside her and it had to be corrected. After that she would be in tiptop shape again. She liked Dr. Bloy, because he listened to her; she could tell him all the things that were out of order in her without feeling that he was anxious to rush her out so that he could call in another patient. He was a perfect gentleman and was willing to lower his fee especially for her, because he knew she was a hard-working widow. She told Lorry she couldn't afford to go to a specialist and pay five dollars a visit. Dr. Bloy performed abortions on the side, was willing to give contraceptive advice, and had the confidence of the 12th Street chippie trade. Lizzie thought he had a big heart and would find her a cheap hospital to stay in.

Lorry was much against the whole idea; he admitted he didn't know anything about medicine, but anyone could see he was a veterinarian; God only knew where he had gotten his diploma and how, out of some license-mill he supposed. Attorney Brown, he said, had doublecrossed her in that property building with Vroeman out at Northmoor, gave her

the cheapest sort of white pine for good lumber, and if she wouldn't listen to anybody, she would get rooked again by this butcher.

His mother said she couldn't afford a big specialist; that was all right if you had a basketful of money and wanted to make a show, and nothing would ever make her go near a clinic. The doctors there treated you like dirt under their feet. Before you had a chance to breathe, they were on top of you with "what's your name, where were you born, ever had the measles, whoopingcough, open your mouth and say ah!" Once she had gone to a clinic, when she was terribly hard up, and after the physician had asked her if she remembered whether anyone on her grandmother's side had had tuberculosis, he wanted to know whether she had any property. She told him after that that if she had any property she wouldn't be there, and walked out.

Harry Coen, a baker on Independence Avenue, who used to come to the shop when Lorry, his mother said, was just a little stinker, and give her dandy jobs, had dropped around again. He was on good terms with a lot of hucksters and never failed to come in with a big watermelon or a basket of peaches. She liked to put up jars of preserves for the winter and was tickled when once he had a boy cart in a crate of black-red cherries. She tried to never miss a fruit season and spent most of her July and August evenings as well as her Sundays peeling and cooking apples for jam and setting by a large store of jelly preserves for the out-of-season months.

Lorry, who was usually made to pitch in, said he could see no reason for spoiling perfectly good fruit in that way. In the end his mother was glad to send him off rather than put up with his grumblings.

Harry Coen had dropped out of sight for years; he had aged, deep wagon-rutted wrinkles semi-circling around the two sides of his mouth like barrel staves. His mother had never taken a great deal to him. The girls used to snicker, when he stood pat in the doorway, a gold-filling grin all over his mouth. He had big, doughy baker's ears, and if you gave him an inch of familiarity, he didn't know how to mind his own business. Besides he and Henry Smith hadn't hit it off well so he stopped patronizing her. That made Lizzie sore; she said that Henry was bossing around too much, and that he was driving away trade.

When she came home from the hospital, weak, without a private nurse, and no one to watch after the shop and see that the girls didn't put everything in their pockets, Harry stood by her. Lorry was then working at the stockyards, and she didn't want to lose his eighteen per he brought in. Harry cooked her meals, made her strengthening soups, emptied her bedpan, and locked up the shop every night. He helped her pay her doctor bills too.

Well, said Lizzie afterwards, you just couldn't turn him away; she tried to at first, said he went about talking more than was good for her name, but he carried on, cried, admitted he wasn't fit to wipe her shoes, and she didn't have the heart to send him along.

He told her his whole life story; how he had been a cook on a steamer heading for South America, was shipwrecked, and picked up by a liner bound for Hoboken, New Jersey. That was his first sight of the United States. Later he took a train for Chicago, tied up with a woman who had more houses than she knew what to do with; he didn't want to marry her; but he was lonesome, and she told him everything would be his. He opened up a big bakershop but from the day they were married, he never knew a day of happiness. She took to running around, got in deep with a traveling salesman from Pittsburgh, and sold everything. The bakershop, which was in her name, she sold for a mere nothing while he was in Hot Springs for ten days to get rid of some rheumatism in his joints. When he got back, she had skipped, leaving nothing behind but the three children, two months' behind rent, with the gas, electricity, and a gray squirrel coat unpaid for.

Harry told her he was making big wages as a first-class baker on Independence Avenue, pulling down forty per week, and as much as fifteen dollars extra for overtime. Together they might accomplish something; he wasn't asleep, and knew how to turn a dollar to advantage. Lizzie wanted to get out of the shop; that was always her ambition; she said she would think it over. She was no longer young and didn't want to waste her time with a man who had nothing else but his week's wages.

Two weeks later Harry told her he had been thinking of all that she had said about having nothing but

wages and wanted to know if she wouldn't advance him two hundred dollars to start a bakery of his own on the Avenue. He had been nurse and cook and took care of the affairs at the shop for her during her bedridden days so that she didn't have the heart to refuse him, she opened up to Lorry after he had been pumping her about Harry Coen. Of course, she didn't have the ready cash, but the National City Bank of Commerce let her have it on the shop.

Harry left the bakery in an independent huff; he had always wanted to tell them to go to hell because some time back he had offered to put up a little capital for a small interest in the place which they turned down with their mouths screwed up at the sides. Harry had just cleaned up four hundred and fifty greenbacks in a pinochle game behind German Zimmerman's Delicatessen store and thought before he dropped it again he might get it into something sound. But Kornman, the baker shop proprietor, sniffed and said he wasn't running a candy joint; four hundred and fifty eagles was no more than a day's take-in.

Right across the street Harry rented a store and a cellar; Charlie and Ralph, his two kids, helped whitewash the basement, but hadn't been at it more than two days when both had to be sent to the City Hospital ward with scarlet fever. That rather took Harry down a peg; it looked like a bad start; but he went straight on, built a brick oven in the cellar that would turn out more pumpernickels and rye

loaves than all of Kornman's mealy bakershop put together. That's what he told the hardware dealer when he went in to borrow a hammer and a few nails. He would have Kornman out of business inside of two months, he guaranteed.

After everything was painted white, and an "open for business" sign pasted across the plate glass on which was lettered in neat enamel, "Harry Coen's High Class Bakery and French Pastry," his daughter, Nancy, decked out in a gingham apron, stood behind the counter for customers to come in. Harry was no backnumber and got a printer on the Avenue to get out some opening notices, which his two boys stuck under doorways. At night after Kornman's was shut tight, they slid fifty bills under his door. Nancy was only fifteen, and Harry thought she made an attraction for the front of the bakershop. He was the baker and put in both day and night shifts. A lot of nosey neighbors on the Avenue came in the first few days.

One woman, who was a cousin by marriage to Kornman, said she almost swallowed a tack which she found in a pumpernickel loaf that was baked in Harry Coen's shop. Some others jabbered that it was a good thing to give Kornman a little competition; he had had his own way long enough and maybe it would bring down the price of bread.

One late Saturday night, really Sunday in the a.m., because Lizzie never locked up before that hour, Harry Coen staggered up the steps of her flat and fell face downward on the couch in the parlor, getting blood all over the green embroidered cover. Lizzie

had just gotten in, and torn off her sticky clothes, and was about to take her cold sponge, when she heard the electric doorbell ring. She didn't want to answer at first, thought it was a stewed customer looking for Emily who occupied the back room. But the ringing was persistent, and after opening the door and wanting to know who was there, she threw a bedspread around her bare shoulders when she saw it was Harry. His nose was a meaty purplish, and his lips bloated as though they were lickered up. She bathed his face in hot water and kept asking, "For God's sake, what's happened?"

When he came to, he told her how four niggers had jumped him, as he was about to go down the steps to the bakeoven through the alley. They tied a rope around his neck, took forty-seven dollars off him, and beat him up. One nigger had said, "Let's cut the bastard's throat!" while another, black as a stovepipe, said they ought to tie him up in a gunny-sack and throw him in the Missouri River. Harry didn't know who the niggers were, but he had good suspicions that Kornman had hired them to lay for him and knock him off.

That mess kept him away from the bakershop for almost two weeks; something had gone phony, he said, with his best arm, and he couldn't put over the old knack he used to in his loaves. Even after he got into overalls again, the loaves didn't come out right. He got disgusted with himself and the bakershop and felt he had better get out of that line. Besides, business was going to the dogs. He hadn't been able to

get help while he was out so that he actually had to close his doors for a week; and anyway, Kornman was knocking him and driving away the best of his trade.

Well, a bakershop was all right for the ignorant, suited to a tee a boor like Kornman, but he was going to get out without any more fuss. He tried to sell, but the landlord wouldn't wait for his rent and dispossessed him, seizing everything that could go under the hammer to get what was coming to him. This disheartened Lizzie considerably and she wouldn't talk about it for weeks.

Harry went to work again, but he said he had given up being a baker for good. He hired a horse and team from Mawx Stedna and went out as a huckster. He paid back Lizzie a little something to show her he meant to do what was right, but after a month he hinted he could do much better, if he didn't have to pay Stedna so much out of his day's earnings for hire. If he could once get a start, he confided to her, he might break in the commission-house business or become a horsedealer. There was money in that. But he could never get anywhere as a peddler without even his own team. He wondered if she could advance him enough to make a first payment on a dandy pair of ponies he knew he could buy off Stedna for a song. It was a real bargain, and if Stedna knew she was backing him as a business woman, he would give him trust.

Lizzie told him she was getting disgusted keeping him going; she was losing confidence in him; be-

sides, she just couldn't do it; where could she get the money, find it in the gutter?

Harry took on, went off in a corner, expecting her to come over, but when she didn't, he kissed her hands, swore he worshipped the very ground she walked on. He knew how noble she was, had been to him; but he would pay her back every cent, a hundred times over.

She let him have the money; she had to go pawn her earrings and a small diamond ring she thought a great deal of, because she had had it so many years. She had made her first down payment on it with the fifty-dollar bill the major had enclosed in a purse he had sent her the Christmas following her refusal to marry him. Mawx Stedna sold him the team and wagon on credit, after he had seen Lizzie and found out that she was standing good for him. He said it was none of his business but that he hated to see a good woman like herself always getting the dirty end of the stick from loafers around town.

Harry rented a stall for his two ponies in an Independence Avenue feed store and livery stable. Lizzie thought a wooden barn like that shanty on the Avenue which was almost falling to pieces wasn't a safe place for the horses and wanted to know why he didn't keep them in Stedna's up-to-date brick livery stable.

Harry said it was much cheaper on the Avenue; besides, he didn't want Stedna sticking his nose in his affairs. He would protect the ponies and wagon by taking out fire insurance and asked her if she would

give him character reference so that he could get a policy. Of course they were her horses and wagon, he would do whatever she thought best.

After the insurance agent had seen Lizzie and passed on the policy, Harry said the policy ought to be signed over on his name as people might talk if it got out that her name was everywhere on his papers. Stedna knew too much as it was.

Lizzie couldn't quite see the point but Harry got blue in the face about it, and she gave in.

For the next few weeks she didn't see Harry. Nancy, who dropped into the back of the shop three times a week after stenog classes for a meal, said he was working like a mule and that he was so tired when he got home that he went right to bed. One Sunday night, the drygoods man who had a lease on a store directly below the Coen family's rooms, said he first saw smoke coming out of the feed-store roof, when he went to try his door. He never felt that he could afford to pay the Pinkerton Agency to keep an eye on his place so he always tried the lock himself every night before driving home in his Ford. He immediately rang the fire alarm, and the whole street was out to see what was the matter. Before the firemen could get started the feed store and livery stable was up in flames. After the hose had dampened the charred fumes the people went off; nobody wanted to see what was left of the horses.

Harry Coen, who was carrying the heaviest insurance, was closely cross-examined by the insurance board. Various investigating agents called on him

and the neighborhood stores to get collateral data. No one seemed to know how the fire had started. One of the little Kornman bastards, that's how Coen always referred to them, who was around the Negro Giants ball park opposite the livery stable with the Independence Avenue gang playing "we-pee" in stuttering Lunkie's cap, said he saw a nigger boy drop a match in the grass against the feed store and run by. However, no one knew who he was, not even to point out to. They all looked alike; you couldn't tell them apart. At the time Harry Coen was taking a chocolate malted milk at the soda fountain and talking shop to the pharmacist when the hardware man across the street ran in and hollered the stables were burning. Harry turned pale, rushed out through the door, his knotted hands whipping through the air, invoking heavenly succor, "My horses!" Flying to the stables, three-quarters of a block down the street on the same side, he pulled at one fireman after another, mumbling, "My horses!" The insurance company, after carefully attesting to these facts, surrendered its case and remitted a draft payable on demand to Harry Coen for the sum not exceeding five hundred dollars.

After the livery-stable fire Harry Coen disappeared from the Avenue altogether for a time. A children's society got wind of the fact that he was running a house somewhere in the West Bottoms; but they couldn't get anything on him, as the two boys and Nancy were boarding out with a distant cousin. Three months afterwards, when everything was sort

of passed over, he rented again the rooms upstairs; but this time he took a short lease on the back coal-flat. Some said he was going back to the bakershop and that he and Kornman had gotten together again. He was an A number one baker, they had to say it. Anyway, the children's society was after him again and Harry Coen was summoned to court. Nancy who went to the settlement dances given by the society, more than was for her good Harry always remonstrated, got to talking with the head worker who chaperoned Saturday night affairs and was asked to see her at the office the following Monday morning. The social worker tried to bring statutory charges against him; but the girl was rather vague in her charges. The court learned, however, that Nancy and the two boys were his stepchildren, and after considerable correspondence the society compelled the real father, a Portland, Oregon tailor who was now a property man, to send three fullfare railroad tickets for his children. The court severely admonished Harry Coen and dismissed the case.

After that he was living upstairs with a chippie for whom he was pimping. She was as skinny as a toothpick, everyone commented, and they couldn't see how she made any catches; but there were plenty stewed ones about, and she seemed to do well enough. Mawx Stedna got after him to make him pay up on the team and wagon; he made a couple of payments and then skipped town; the chippie also disappeared; but nobody knew whether they left together. Some said he just took what money they

had put aside together in the bottom of the trunk and which she had made whoring and cleared out.

Mawx Stedna dropped in on Lizzie not long after the third payment was overdue. She had stood good for him, and he didn't see why he should get stuck. But when he saw how broken up she was about everything and heard how he had beat her out of the insurance money, he just went off and didn't mention a word about it. She knew she had put her foot into it and was really responsible for the balance of the payments; she hadn't been in business for nothing; and when Stedna said, "that's all right, Lizzie, jes' forget about it," she wept, guessed some people were made for misfortune.

About a month later, who should drop in, commented Peck waiting for a hurryup shave, as he had to get back to the lunchroom, but Lizzie's old sweetheart, Henry Smith and none other. The same old Henry, with his steamboat sporting ways, his good-looking hair, little thinner, scraped off somewhat on top like old framegilding, but not appearing a year older. He went right for Lizzie's chair soon as it was empty, said he wanted the whole works, manicure, haircut, a shave, the once-over, massage, and an egg-shampoo. But Lizzie was very quiet, said "how-dee-doo," and called another girl over to work on him. The girl at the first chair tried to get sweet on him, but he said dryly he just wanted a shave and not too close either.

Henry didn't go off, however, stuck around, joshed Cecile Henty, an oldtimer who had come back to

work for Lizzie, and had his shoes shined by the porter. He was sitting on the settee backed up against the wall and kidding Lizzie along because she wouldn't talk to him. He fidgeted around a bit, because the settee was sticking to his pants, and walked over to the show case to roll the dice. "Shake you for a cigar, Lizzie, old girl," he laughed, but she went on counting the dirty towels, seeing if the wire baskets were emptied of hairy and used shaving paper, and then examined the spittoons to make sure that the lazy porter had washed them clean of tobacco juice and cigar stubs.

The girls had all gone home; and Lizzie had refused two late customers, quite against her business motto, because she was fagged out and, "what was the use of talking about it anyway, she didn't know."

Henry took her hand in his, and patted it gently, but she turned away. "How about a few peaches and grapes, Lizzie girl, think that might cheer you up a bit?" opened up Henry again, with the old guitar twang in his light, vaudeville voice.

Lizzie smiled around the corners of her mouth, despite herself.

"Be right back, Lizzie," rang back Henry as he trotted up to the corner around on Walnut Street to the Dago fruit stand.

Coming back, as she was about to lock up, with a huge paper sack filled up to the top, he complained banteringly, "Trying to ditch me? Well, here you are, brought back the whole shooting match, wanted to stick the Dago in to boot, but couldn't get him in."

They went home together. They took the street car, an added expense which she always spared herself unless she was all in or a customer, one of the oldtimers, came along with her. Henry Smith felt a little shaky and almost out of place; he thought reminiscently as they got to the door, and he halted.

"You can come up just for a minute, Henry; I'm awful tired, and want to go right to bed."

While he waited in the parlor, she changed her dress, washed her sticky face, wiped her pince-nez glasses as she came in in a laundered kitchen apron, and sat down in a rocker underneath the postcards.

He asked her to play a little for him, but she said she was out of practice, hadn't touched a note, she couldn't remember the time when. Henry whirled the scratched mahogany top of the piano stool around on its unoiled axle, and did some old sea songs and sang in the proper baritone voice for them.

Afterwards she told him about Harry Coen; she said she might as well give him the whole spiel from beginning to end. When she got to the four niggers in the alley jumping strong Harry, Henry Smith said, begging her pardon, that that was all horse-manure; because his cousin, a secondmate, who happened in occasionally to the shop, wrote him that that loafin' huckster was trying to get next to her; and he came back especially from a vacation in St. Louis to get him.

"The four niggers in the alley who flattened out

Harry's mug was me. I gave him the straight Kentucky blue grass stuff," Henry twinkled.

Anyhow, what did it matter, returned Lizzie; he'd better be getting along now as it was late and she had to open up the shop, as she couldn't trust those girls from here to there. That left him cold, he sat there for a time, and then half-rising and uncomfortable he got up to go, and ambled out of the room. Halfway down the dust-carpeted steps, he paused slowly, fumbling in his pockets for something, perhaps hoping she would call him back. The door closed and Lizzie sat on the couch against the couch cushion with a rose embroidered on it that Nancy had made for her, and looked at the lace curtains which flagged back and forth against the September breeze.

When Lorry got in she was playing at the piano and singing in a thin, quasi-high, broken quaver. She said she was feeling a little blue and that maybe she'd start to practice her notes again.

On Sunday evenings Lorry went around to see Venus Hikkman; he had known her when her mother worked in the shop. They lived now out near the end of the Prospect street-car line not far from Electric Park. Lorry liked that part of Kansas City; he had always wanted his mother to get a house out there; but she was used to the 8th Street flat; besides it hardly cost her any rent, as she let out the three extra rooms. It was convenient getting to the shop and not hard to let the rooms, because they were on the car line and right near the heart of the city.

On Sunday evenings, Mrs. Hikkman, who was supposed to be kept by Dr. Bloy, got all primped up to go out with him. She was crazy about him; but he was already married.

"Mrs. Hikkman was the prettiest thing that ever happened in her day," said Lizzie, "but she's faded terribly in the last year or so, grievin' herself away."

Venus had turned Christian Scientist, sold Bibles during her spare time, and played the violin in a movie house in the evenings, except Sunday which was her only day off. When Venus and Lorry were alone in the parlor she would read Mary Baker Eddy to him. She wanted him to become a Christian Scientist, he said he would become one if she loved him. She admonished him seriously and said he must not be wicked; but Lorry who had been listening enough to her readings to trip her up on that said that according to Mary Baker Eddy and Hamlet he guessed there was nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so. Well, if that was so, went on Lorry, proud of his logical precision, it's you who are evil. I'm awfully good, so good, that I can see nothing but good even in your evil-thinking of me. Now isn't that good of me?

The following Sunday Lorry brought her a box of Lowney's chocolates, said her lips smelled better than sandalwood soap and that her breath was sweeter-tasting than mushmellons, and then pursued his same tactical methods with her. He got as far as holding her hand, but when he tried to kiss her she became troubled. He reminded her of the principles of Chris-

tian Science, and while she was trying to figure them out, he warmed her breasts, cool at the extremities, with his fingers. About this time her mother came in and Lorry jumped up in a hurry, while Venus patted out her rumpled blouse.

These evenings, unfortunately, came to an end, as the Hikkmans moved to Omaha, Nebraska, to join the other branch of the family. As a matter of fact Doctor Bloy's wife got wise, told him that she'd drag his name into court if he didn't give the hussy up and stay at home.

CHAPTER X

RIDIN' THE BLINDS

Every Sunday Lorry kept looking through the want ads and opportunity columns to see if he couldn't locate a position for himself. There were lots of traveling salesmen wanted; the idea of going on the road appealed to him; he wanted to get out of Kansas City, Missouri. Perhaps, elsewhere he might strike some luck; but he felt if he stayed around the stockyards or Mawx's livery stables all afternoon or hung about the Star Ladies Barber Shop and upper 12th in front of the up-to-date, swell, chorine hotels, he would never get on. Better to bum around the country, than be a city bum, he thought; he would at least get some experience out of that. Of course, if he could travel from state to state in a refined way, sleeping in Pullmans, eating in dining cars, that would be much better. As a salesman he could do all that; he could have money, wear classy vests, and wind up seeing the Grand Canyon.

But something worried him about all this. He had heard that high-class salesmen with large territories made as much as fifteen thousand a year. Drummers, who came into the shop when he was small, always seemed to have money to burn. If he remembered, they always carried a staple line, Libby's milk and canned foods or Rogers' silverware. If one could step into something like that, he might

not feel so shaky about salesmanship; but he didn't know how to go about it; he didn't have any pull, and he felt he would never have the guts to go canvassing from house to house. If a fellow had backbone he could do it, but he didn't think he had any backbone.

Or if he could get into the offices of Armour's Packing Company, not as a stoop-shouldered clerk, but as private secretary to some big gun, that would be a way out of the rut. Of course, he didn't know how to take shorthand or do any typing, but he could catch on to that soon enough, if some one with connections and enough inside dope could work it for him.

One morning, going through as usual his Sunday *Kansas City Star* he noticed an ad that called for men who wanted to take up educational work as a profession and get paid while learning. Perhaps it was another one of those gags to draw suckers in, he thought, but he would call and see what it was all about.

The following Monday he was at the office at nine sharp. A lot of other men, snappily dressed and with salesmanship confidence were seated, smoking Fatimas while waiting their turns. Lorry was a little bit nervous, thought of leaving, but stuck around to see it through. He knew that once he got started, he had the gift of gab and could make an impression. When he was let into the private office, he said "glad to meet you, sir," put in a few words, gotten out with snappy precision, listened with deference to the di-

rector without hearing much what he said, and was hired punctiliously.

When he got home to tell his mother that he was leaving for Beatrice, Nebraska the day after tomorrow, he was muddled about certain particulars. The first day he was to spend familiarizing himself with the catalogue, learning what visualization in education meant, and understanding just what psychology of talk was. The word salesman was avoided; they were not salesmen, they were told, but educators. Of course, they would have to do some pioneering; get the mothers interested, do the women's auxiliaries, speak before the different chambers of commerce; then everything would be easy rolling. He was to get twelve dollars a week, as a start, of course. This troubled him; he wasn't quite certain, as he was so absorbed in his own thoughts while the director was speaking to him, if he received the twelve dollars, whether his commissions averaged that or not. He couldn't remember whether there was a hitch there. The director seemed to skim over that, as the twelve one-dollar greenbacks didn't appear to concern the executive. However, his mother didn't warm up to the proposition as he had expected. She didn't want him to leave town. She wasn't quite sure what was best for Lorry; he was a good talker; he might get along and pick up some extra money. Anyway, she knew in the end she would have to give in to him.

Two mornings later the train pulled out; the crew had already gotten into their seats; as the westbound

local moved slowly out of the iron trainshed, Lorry stood on the steps waving to his mother who wiped her steaming pince-nez glasses, her face fisted up, and on him.

They got into Beatrice in the evening; Lorry hadn't gotten chummy with any of the others, and stayed at a separate hotel. He walked about the town for a little, the lights of the candy store and gasoline station across from it making him lonely.

The next morning the crew and the manager got together. He assigned districts, spoke in a peppery, go-get-'em way, like a spittin' oracle; while Lorry was all the time trying without success to overcome the scarlet that was tingling all over his face. Cutting short with a "now, boys, let's get to work," he went off, the crew breaking up, mostly in couples, leaving Lorry behind up against a lamp-pole, asking himself why he had come, when he knew—while he was trying to wriggle out of what he knew—that it was a door-to-door canvass. He was shaky, had stage-fright, felt as though he had locomotor ataxia or what it might feel to have it; he ambled about, turning into by-wagonroads or following the pavement down toward the shanty railway waiting room. Something had gotten into his mind which he was trying to push out; the idea of pulling out of that one cowntown and, perhaps, catching a train on the fly, and bumming off somewhere, kept sticking to him. But he didn't want to think of it; he ought to make a stab at selling anyway; it might do him some good to try to live down those creepy sensations he got

whenever he thought of ringing some strange door-bell and rehearsing his sales talk, "Good-morning, madam, I'm representing the neo-educational league. A new method, based on scientific experimentation, for interesting your boy or girl in his studies. Visualization is what we call it. May I step in? Thank you. Every member of our crew is a college man, of course. We're out to get your subscription. The more names we secure the better hope there is of getting the Beatrice Board of Education to lay aside its old cob-web principles and take up visualization. Incidentally, the one of us who receives the most votes, each subscription, madam, counts as a vote, receives a college scholarship which entitles him to free tuition. By subscription you will be helping two causes. . . ." Every time he repeated that, hoping to bolster himself up, something seemed to go out of his knees, and his mind went back again to that westbound train. He saw there was no use going over it; he had better push himself through somebody's door to get started either in or out.

Feebly he tapped at a door, not finding a bell, and kicked up against the gate, relieved that no one was at home.

A little girl coming out on the porch, called, "Whatcha want, mister?"

"'Sall right, come back," fumbled Lorry rapidly walking away, as though he had just assaulted somebody.

Down the road, he rapped with a little more get-up, straightening out his shoulders, with a "Fine morn-

ing, Mrs. Waters. Just been in to see your neighbor, Mrs. Kidder" on the tip of his tongue.

A woman came out with greasy-looking gray hair which seemed as though it had just gotten into the soup, saw a book under his arm, and slammed the door at him with a "don't 'low agents nor dogs here."

He stood there, his skin dryly stretched over his pushed-out cheek bones; something kept buzzing in his ears, and he couldn't seem to move or jerk himself out of it for the life of him. He dragged through the yard-dust, and on the other side of the fence; he stumbled on, tripping up against a jutting bed of rock which stuck out sharply above the other part of the road. Shambling on, he kept thinking up smart answers he might have whizzed over to that thing at the door. He was having a dialogue with himself; then he stopped, coming to, and thought he had better lay down on the job and skip. After a while he tried another, he had heard about the worst; besides, he thought of rounding out the morning before getting a bite. He almost sold a set of visualization catalogues to an old woman who asked him in, gave him a cup of hot coffee and a piece of homemade chocolate cake; it was for her grandson, and she would have to see her boy about it.

After a sandwich and a piece of pie at a lunch counter, he got off the main highway for fear he'd run into the manager or some one in the crew. He didn't want to wait and hear how many sets they had sold or listen to some wise bird in the crew haw out how many votes he had pinned down. He slunk into

the waiting room; his eyes zigzagged the time-table; a local was due at 1.15 and was headin' for Omaha, the corn center. Twenty-eight minutes to wait; if he could lay low till it pulled in, he could sneak out of those sticks without being seen. He got a ticket, sat hunched over in a corner behind a cold coal stove, watching the clock hands worm around. Suddenly he jerked up, rushed over to the hotel, up the stairs, went for his valise, checked out, and tore back. A few minutes later the locomotive puffed in, he slid his suitcase inside, swung on, and finding a seat, the train left Beatrice, Nebraska.

In Omaha he got a single room at the Paxton; it was a transient hotel for men on the road; lot of sporting women stayed there; it catered also to permanent roomers, and almost any day, when the sun was out, there was a string of loungers warming their bottoms in half-tipped cane chairs on the sidewalk. Some straws, and a Panama or two still shaded half-dozing eyes—although the straw hat season was up—which got the scraping wheels of the street car and a slant on a leg up from the French heel as they skidded around the corner.

The first few days Lorry killed inside the movies; he took his meals at the cafeterias which were just coming in then, to cut down expenses. A fruit salad and some cake with milk was usually enough for him in the evening; some hot cakes at a lunch counter was his breakfast. He slept late in the mornings, always somewhat groggy as he got out of bed; and hardly ever turned in till after midnight.

His evenings were the hardest to pass away. He wanted to date up some fast woman hanging about the Paxton lobby; but he knew it was useless, as he didn't have the cash to show her a good time. Often, when he was about to go up to the room, a keen-looking skirt ascending in the elevator at the Paxton threw him off his resolution to roll into bed early so that he could be out in time to look for a job. He was never certain whether they had given him the once-over or not; and sometimes he would dash up the steps, his nerves in his fingers, see what floor the elevator stopped on, and walk by her room as she unlocked it, his eyes passing over into her tightly-skirted body. Afraid to stop or to try and get chatty, he walked down the hallway, coming back a minute later, standing in front of her door, hoping she would open it and ask him in. Traveling salesmen in Pullmans told stories like that, but nothing of the sort ever happened to him. Most of the time he wound up the night pacing the streets, following some woman to her doorstep, thinking she perhaps might sense what was going on in him, and let him talk to her. He thought of going to some dance hall, but his suit wasn't snappy enough, and his heels were badly run-down on one side; besides, most of them were coupled up. He always kept hoping he might run into Venus; he didn't know how to look her up; he didn't have her house number, and she wasn't in the telephone directory.

After he had paid his first week's bill at the Paxton and realized how low he was getting on cash, he de-

cided he was going to get down to business. There was no use prowling the streets at night; he would never have any luck anyway; he might as well buck up and get to work. He spent his next few mornings sticking around employment agencies; he hadn't lined up anything yet; there was no likelihood either of getting a position as a floor-salesman in one of the large department stores. The war was over; and he heard there was a great letting down in production in all the big industries. That affected the small man too.

One afternoon he took his Hamilton railroad time-keeper to a pawnshop and hocked it for twelve bucks. He could have gotten much more; but he expected to take it out of hock soon, and that would be stiff if he pawned it for all it was worth. Having had nothing to eat, he dropped into a quick lunch, ordered up some Boston baked beans and a cup of steaming coffee, and then headed straight for the employment bureaus, considerably out of his shoes.

He found out that a crew of laborers were being shipped to Greening, Wyoming for road work on the Union Pacific. Lorry went in, stood in line, waiting his turn, but when he reached the table where the hiring agent stood, the latter toughened up with a "gimme a look at them hands, bo." Taking hold of Lorry's hands which he turned up on their palms, he corkscrewed the side of his mouth, "Them cornflake mitts won't do."

Others, some in overalls and in khaki shirts who knew the ropes, drew up their muscles, almost push-

ing their fists into the agent's face with a smirk, and got railroad passes for Greening, Wyoming. Lorry peered over the shoulder of a fellow who had just been O.K.'d, and who was examining the number on the piece of green pasteboard which was to give him a free ride for a thousand miles. Otherwise the card was blank; the number was scribbled on it in pencil. Lorry slipped out; he didn't want to make himself noticeable; scouting around the town, he dropped into printers' offices and into stationery stores asking for a piece of green cardboard.

In his hotel room, he scissored a piece square, pencilled a likely number on it, and packed his suitcase. He would have to clear out; he couldn't stall any longer; another week's rent was up, and he didn't have enough on him to meet it. Putting on a bold front and walking out of the hotel was the only way he could see clear. If they caught him they would probably have him locked up for petty larceny or violation of some hotel rule; but he had to risk it; he had to get out of Omaha; couldn't stand sticking around there any more; he was fed up with it.

Going down in the elevator, he went straight for the desk, leaving his valise next to a long wooden bench in the lobby facing the side exit. He glanced over some Union Pacific travel pamphlets in a decisive, business-like manner, took out his wallet, handed the clerk at the desk his last five, asking him for a couple of postage stamps, turned about, pretentiously placed his wallet back in his side coat pocket, catching the eye of the bellhop near the side exit, and

started in that direction. Approaching his valise, the bellhop slid across the marble floor for it; Lorry, seeing out of the corner of his eye, while he was thoughtfully perusing the pamphlet, that there were several people at the desk screening off the vision of the desk clerk, he told the bellhop, gesturing offhandedly, to take it outside and that he would be with him in a moment. Turning the leaf of the Union Pacific booklet he moved for the door, his feet running after one another faster than he wanted them to. Outside, he tipped the bellhop a half buck, took his suitcase, started down the street at a dignified, leisurely gait at first, gradually getting closehuddled to the buildings, and then turned down a side street. At the next corner he caught a street car on the fly which happened to be going down to the railroad station.

Going into the American Express Railway Company he handed his suitcase over to a billing clerk to be shipped collect to Los Angeles. He had made up his mind he was going to bum his way out to the coast. He wanted to see California, the land of Sun-kist oranges. Then he beat it out of the railroad terminal district; he was afraid he might look suspicious hanging about there and be picked up by a plainclothesman. He couldn't take chances and lose his freedom. That's all that seemed to matter now. The bulls were getting stricter, he heard; there were too many hoboes and second-story men floating around the country since the war.

That night he went into the cheap section of Omaha to rent a room for the night. He saw a couple

of places where they had rooms, which were only half-partitioned and had to be shared with some stranger. They were only two bits a night, but he was sort of leery of them; sleeping on a cot, which looked dirty, slept-in, and roachy in the same cubicle-like space with some lousy stick-'em-up fellow for all he knew didn't appeal to him. Toward midnight he rented a clean-looking room in a more respectable hotel for a dollar.

Early the next morning he left the hotel, got some ham and eggs, and then walked down to the railroad yards outside of the station. The train was leaving at 7.12, going out on track 8, the number of the locomotive above the green headlight 213. He kept in the background, out of sight, and caught it as it came around the curve, hanging on tenaciously till he got a sure foothold and then crawled in between the blinds between the mail and baggage car. He had lit out of Omaha.

At a stop where the firemen took on water, he jumped down, located the car in which the Greening, Wyoming crew were seated, opened the door, and slipped into the lavatory, staying there till the train paced up again. Sticking the green pass into his cap between the fastening button, he came out and took a seat on the wooden bench next to another.

"Goin' to that——hole of a Greening, buddy?" asked the fellow opposite him.

"Yep," returned Lorry in a low voice, his eyes fidgeting, as they saw the conductor nearing. He came by, looked at their passes, and went on.

"Greening's no place for a white man. Worse than the Mohave to get out of," came back the fellow across from him, wetting his dusty throat with his spit which he pushed down on the floor, scraping his hobnailed shoe over it.

"I suppose," returned Lorry, wiping his face with his dirty handkerchief. It wasn't noon yet; he'd have to sit up all night; it was a through train; he didn't know how he would get anything to eat.

Around 11.30 the others took their eats out of paper sacks, and started to pack away a couple of sandwiches. The fellow opposite him was eating away, his eyes in the paper bag, not looking at him. Lorry got up, moved through the aisle, and looked out of the door-window at the flat tableland passing him. The country looked parched and lolling like an old meaty dog with his tongue out. Looking for a paper sanitary cup, and finding none, he pressed down the faucet handle holding one hand under it to get the water as it came out in a thin, shaky stream. He tasted it, made a face; it had the stink of metal about it, like the water in a tin chamber pot. He came back after a while and tried to doze off. A foursome across the aisle were rattling way, the rest were quiet and seemed to have fallen in with the jogging motion of the train.

Towards six they took out their eats again; Lorry rose, swayed a little, as he passed through the aisle to the door-window again. The train had made a short halt in a small town; but he was afraid to get down; he didn't want to become too conspicuous, or

take the chance of missing the train. The train wasn't due in Greening till 12.40 the next day. He thought of taking a drop of water again; but he felt that would only sicken him. He slept fitfully through the night; when he awakened some time before 5.30 the fellow across from him was beside him. He moved away from him, looking at the dull, metallic sky. He still had three one-dollar bills in his pocket; he could get a few decent feeds out of that. Seven hours to go; couldn't sleep any more, he kept looking at the country go by, still, not even alive as a cemetery, no vegetation, no memories there, getting into desert; they would soon be hitting Wyoming. He might get on to Cheyenne afterwards; he had heard about it as a boy; cowboy country, poker games, maybe he could get something to do there, and see a bit of the old dime-novel wild west fast dying out. He wanted to feel his pocket to see if his wallet was still there; but he didn't want to budge against the fellow next him, and tried to doze for a bit.

Later the hobnailed shoes shuffling out awakened him. Seeing an agent outside counting the men as they filed by and checking them off, he got off the other side of the tracks, going back a ways till the train went on.

Some twenty minutes afterwards he walked back along the wooden trestles avoiding the pointed cinders which cut into the thin soles of his shoes. A pipe shooting cold water was sticking up out of a triangle of damp grass; he moved over to it, put his face under it, letting the water run over his face and down

his mouth. A little refreshed he looked about him for a lunch counter to fill up his sick belly. Patting his side pocket to see if his wallet was there, he abruptly stuck his hand into it, fumbling from one to the other rummaging through his inside coat pocket. He thought back for a moment; where could he have dropped it? He searched again.

Mechanically he dragged into the waiting room and slouched, his back looped over, his head appearing tied to it like a knotted laundry bag. Trying to join the Union Pacific road gang was out of the question; the agent would soon find out his pass number was faked up and there would be hell to pay. He wanted to go on; stick around for the next freight; pulling out his handkerchief, a coin fell down, rolling over the floor. Bending down he picked up the nickel and trudged out looking for a bakery. He went into a general merchandise store and bought a box of Loose Wiles Graham crackers and chewed on them, getting added taste out of them by drinking large quantities of water that fell out of the pipe outside the waiting room.

Toward the late part of the afternoon he caught an Acme freight going west. He climbed up on top and lay flat on his back. He kept an eye open on the lookout for the brakeman who made his rounds from one box car to the other watching for hoboes. If you had a union card, he heard, they wouldn't bother you; but he had never been in any kind of trade union; so he had to watch his step and keep his ears open.

He went into a dead sleep, awakening at night in a railroad yard. It looked like a big junction to him; the box cars were standing still; the engine was gone; they probably shunted and cut them; he couldn't make out. He got down, his bones blue and stick-like, getting a kick back all through him as he hit the ground. He felt all rheumatic, his body like the sooty side of an open coal box car. There were a lot of cars silently sprawled on different tracks that weren't made up. A locomotive, squeaking back on one track and headin' forward on another, made him feel less isolated. A signal night watchman was swinging red and green lanterns. It seemed that another train was being made up; some of the box cars which rammed into one another and coupled were Armour and Swift refrigerators; others were empty cattle cars. Down a bit a gang of boes were about, warming themselves at a bonfire near the watchman's station that was built like an outhouse. Lorry was cold, but kept away; he was a little leery of tramps and bums on the road.

As the cars and the engine coupled, some twenty-five boes jumped her; they were on the sides of the locomotive; some behind the coal car; others on top of the box car. The freight pulled out; Lorry threw out his arms, his fingers choking the metal rung of a ladder at the side. On top, he was two box cars down and away from the gang. He could hear them talking above the pensive scraping of the freight wheels. A couple of niggers, the rest whites started to come back; he wanted to dodge, but didn't know

where to go. He sat there, his right arm twisted around the back of him, his body wiring against the tumbling-down night.

"Iz yu all a gerl, bo?" a nigger asked, splicing his mouth wide to get it out. Another hobo looked at him. Lorry looked suspicious there alone, shivering, his cap pulled down over his ears as though hiding long hair done up in a knot.

"Not hardly," coughed Lorry.

They stood about, divvying up a few potatoes they had roasted in the bonfire, then they trailed back, some bo hissing a "beat it, the brakeman!"

"Pipe down, bo," growled a mick, "we'll throw the sonofabitch off if he comes this here way."

Lorry, who was apart, dropped down, hanging on to the sideladder for a long time, but no one appeared. Coming up again, he moved from one box car to the other, trying some of the sliding doors at the side. Finding one open, he swung himself down, falling inside. He closed it and huddled up in a corner. There was no straw around, and the bottom boards were splintered, with a stiff, desolate-feeling air coming up through the cracks. He kept fidgeting about, not seeming able to get fitted in right against some corner; there was a smell of human excreta coming from somewhere in the box car. He went off for an hour or so, and jarred up by some bump or other, it was hard to doze off again. The cold kept getting into him, tightening up his joints.

Some time early in the morning he stood up, stiff as a nail, kicking one foot out after the other to get the

ache out of his knees, which felt as hollow to him as a bone chewed raw by an alley dog. Catching onto the ladder, he went above again. The boes were lying about, smokeridden figures. Lorry went over, sitting within earshot.

He heard one bo say, "Jailbirds, we're hittin' near Ogden; they's a lot of bulls thair; if you all wanchur dry bread and stew go on into Ogden an' getch yur-selves pinched."

That's the way they took it, thought Lorry, a good way, no doubt; but he couldn't. He didn't care if he never saw any grub, he wanted his freedom, he wanted to knock about, hit the road whenever he felt like it, bum around the country. He would get through somehow, but he didn't want to run into a bull and be locked up. That began to bother him; he looked down; the train was rattling away at forty anyway; he wasn't sure; but he knew he couldn't jump. He'd have to wait till they got outside the yards of Ogden, Utah. He'd have to lay low, too, when he got in; he might get picked up in the streets. He wasn't quite sure what he would do yet.

Pulling into the yards outside of Ogden, Lorry jumped, hitting the coal cinders. He went down solid, bleeding at the hands and knees, and limped out of the railroad yards, stumbling toward the Lincoln Highway. He trudged along, half-heartedly hailing passing autos; he was too dirty; his shoes half off him; cinders in his ears; soot through his hair; no one would stop for him; they might think he was a stick-up. There was no way for him to change

clothes; his suitcase was probably in L. A. by this time. He would give a lot for a clean handkerchief and a piece of soap. He didn't dare go into the Ogden railway station; nothing would finish him sooner. No use moping, he thought; he had to get on. According to a milepost, he was about thirty-six miles from Salt Lake City; an interurban went by; there were a number of Mormon farms around, he believed; it would be pleasant riding decently into the Mormon center.

A Ford sedan coming along halted. "Can take you as far as Salt Lake if you're going that way," said the driver who looked like one of those good fellows on the road.

"Thanks very much," returned Lorry, getting in.

"Where you from, don't mind my asking?" went on the man, making the bend.

"No, not at all, Kansas City."

"Whew! Are you one of those, I'm from Missouri, you've got to show me fellows?"

"I don't think so," answered Lorry, looking about him at the dry, humorless country.

He turned out to be a cigarette salesman. They made a few stops on the road at some candy, cigarette, and combination soda and sandwich counters. Then they headed on toward Salt Lake, where he took Lorry into a classy hotel restaurant and ordered up a real meal for him. Going into the lavatory first, Lorry put his head under the faucet, scrubbed his neck, ears, and face with the liquid soap that came out of a small tap connected with a cylindrical bottle.

The salesman rambled on about spiritualism, his family, his wife, and two kids. Lorry listened; and when they parted the cigarette salesman said he was the brightest lad he had ever picked up. One had to be careful, he shook hands, who you were giving a ride; you never knew who was going to blackjack you and take your car. Well, he liked company, he concluded, and he was glad to have met him. He'd pick him up any time he ever saw him on the highway again. With a "so long" he slipped him a buck, and drove off.

He would sleep between the sheets that night; that was something. Of course, he wouldn't go blowing in his buck on a bed for the night. He had just had his fill of an honest-to-goodness feed; so he could keep going till morning without tightening his belt. As for getting a job, he couldn't tell. Salt Lake didn't impress him very much; it looked like a pretty cheap town to him; the thought of that made him sag a little. His good spirits went out like an old oil lamp. But at least he had gotten far enough to size up a burg. There was something about its gutters, shanties, macadam roads, depot, that got into his nostrils and gave him the feel of a town. Cities were smells that came from butcher shops, gasoline fumes, the storekeeper; he got at things through his nose, the way the American estimates other peoples, always through their sweats and kitchens.

He knocked about for a bit till he bumped into the bum section of town; he needed some sleep badly; he was all played out, he could feel that. A

fellow had to watch out for himself or before he knew it, he would be down with t.b. . . . It was hard finding a clean hotel cheap; there was always something musty and oppressive like stale, leaking gas—and the ghastly white plaster got into his bones after a while. All that got him, like a mortuary, alley wind. Perhaps, it occurred to him, he might put up for the night at one of those mission houses; they ought to be fairly clean and reasonable; some well-laundered sheets on the cot, maybe even a regular-sized bed, and some doughnuts and hot coffee in the morning free of charge if you did a few hymns and some prayers with them. It would be worth it. But he was too fagged out to go on; he went inside a punk hotel, he could make that out before he opened the door. Well, what could one expect for two bits? Outside was a sign hanging crosswise, "Beds Twenty-Five and Fifty Cents." There weren't really any rooms there; space had been partitioned off, with four cots to a compartment for two bits, and two at fifty cents. He didn't like parting company with his buck; so he only let go of a quarter; after all, once he slept, what would be the difference? The afternoon wasn't quite out yet; so he could be alone for a time anyway. He dropped off his shoes, thinking as he looked at his holey, smelly socks that he had better drop in to the five and ten the next day for a pair.

Some hours later, he woke up feeling all groggy; maybe he had hit the hay too soon after his feed; he couldn't seem to get to sleep again. He was itchy all

over; and for a minute he couldn't imagine what it could be. Of course, he hadn't had a bath since he was at the Paxton; and he hadn't gone in strong for them then, as he was too down to make any sort of effort. Perhaps, he had the measles or scarlet fever; dirty as he was he must have been collecting all kinds of germs. Suddenly it occurred to him to examine the bedsheets and the pillowcase; but the electric-bulb light hanging in the hallway was too dim to see anything. He had to give it up, he supposed. But he couldn't stop thinking about it. Finally he slipped into his pants and went out to the toilet. He got up as close under the light as he could, and looked under his b.v.ds. A lot of bumps on his skin; "Goddam bedbugs!" he let out. "Hell I'm goin' to get out of this lousy joint!"

When he was back on his cot again, he cooled off a little; his bones ached and felt as though they were splintered up; what was the use? He had better put up with it for the night. He needed a rest. Suddenly he jumped out from under the blanket and felt in his pants pocket to see if his six bits was till there. He didn't know how he could have left it open like that in his trousers. Two of the other three cots there were lain in; the bodies only partly undressed lay half out of the blankets which looked like mealy flour. Their socks, sticking out and loosely puffed about the toes, stunk; and their nostrils spread out like an uncorked stale beer bottle made him nose toward the wall next to him. Stealthily he counted his six bits, stacked it, and knotted it in his dirty

handkerchief. Then as he used to do in the orphanage, whenever he had a dime or a quarter, he slipped it under his bedsheet and lay right on it. Turning around on them to see if they were asleep, he looked at them more closely.

What rotting carcasses all three of them were, he thought; why get superior, he hmphed, he probably stunk worse than they did. Birds of a feather, bunk and stink together. That's what one gets ridin' the blinds, boing about. It's an education in itself, cures dandruff, fifty-seven varieties, Mush Tate's dictionary, so is Billy Sunday . . . he laughed softly; it was a sort of swallow of cool Missouri country well-water soothing his tramp's throat. . . . Ho, oh, hum, um, um, he haw . . . abruptly he jerked around; a neck was out steadyin' two eyes out of the blanket on a pair of stilts; they were focussed on Lorry. He looked at them; twisted toward the wall and chortled inside. . . .

The next morning Lorry started for the Mormon tabernacle; he had heard stories about Brigham Young and Joseph Smith and their many wives. It was the upkeep that seemed to bother Lorry most; it was a shame the government had stepped in and cut out the rough stuff. Way back in 1800 and something there had been a lot of kicking; some ministers with no guts, he reckoned, had gotten up a petition or some fool nonsense against those highpowered Utah farmers. There was a grand fuss; and now all they had left was a tabernacle and a big organ; that's as much as he knew about the history of the Mor-

mons. Anyway, they were an interesting race; and he wanted to get some more inside information, if there wasn't any admission to get in.

He didn't stick around long; there were no hand-outs being made; besides, things weren't so hot as he looked for; he guessed the government had pretty much taken the fire out of those boys. However, the mountains around Salt Lake weren't so bad; they were something like the climate in Los Angeles, one bo had told him; you couldn't live off it.

His trip to the state bureau didn't come off so well; Salt Lake was dead, the man behind the desk informed him; he said business all over was slack, labor tight, industry going to the dogs; but Lorry knew better; it was the Mormons dying out; history was vomiting all over itself again; look what happened to Spain when the Israelites were kicked out.

Lorry went off, omitted breakfast; he had to hang on to what he had; but at noon he splurged, blowing himself to ham and eggs, and took in a movie in the evening.

The evenings were the hardest to get through; he didn't play pool or shoot crap; besides, he didn't have the coin for such pastime, he hadn't been inside a library for ages; and if he did loiter about the bookshelves for an afternoon, he didn't know what to read anyway. "Henry Esmond" had never given him very much; and he quit "Pendennis" after the first ninety pages. He had been told at high school or somewhere that it was too deep for one his age; maybe it was, he didn't know. At any rate,

he couldn't remember anything about it. As for that fellow Charlie Dickens, he gave him a pain, both he and his "Tale of Two Cities." That's what one got going to high school; well, he was going to California instead.

Well, Wallie Reid in "The Love Burglar" wasn't as good as a burlesque; but it was passably entertaining and made him forget himself for a couple of hours. After the movie was out, he walked the streets; the mountain air in his nose braced him, and he became moody and thoughtful, and wanted to walk straight through the night and get pensive about things around him. However, it didn't last long; before he knew it, he was all dragged out. Walking like that couldn't keep him up; he wished at that moment he had a hotel room to go to; there were probably loads of empty rooms in the town that night; if he could find one he'd climb in through the window and slip out about five in the morning without anyone knowing it.

Coming toward an alley next to which stood a transient hotel, he got back a bit deep in the shadow and swung up by his arms onto the firescape. The excitement inside him was getting the better of his cool resolve of the minute before; suddenly he heard some one's leather soles clacking against the sidewalk; it sounded like the heavy clodhoppers of a cop; he dropped, and snooped down low close beside the buildings moving toward the opposite exit on the other street. Then there came a whistle; his body stiffened out taut; he flew; zigzagged and got

off toward the Union Station; he made for the tracks and thought of hitting out right away.

There was a singular quiet over the depot yards; the night was sooty and as lonely to him as a side-tracked caboose; nothing about but some red and green signal lanterns swinging near the switches. No boes about he could see; bulls on the job, he supposed.

Little later there were some box cars scraping along, desolately shunting; a locomotive came up, its headlights drawn out like batwings. He became all nerves and couldn't wait to hop her; he was going on, beatin' the bulls; he would take the blinds; lay low down a ways. Soon she would be all made up; he could get, like a jackknife in his ears, the coupling-pins knocking up against one another and connecting. He moved off around the bend where a bo was ditched, waiting; they said nothing, and kept back. A brakeman was lanterning along, peering at the rods and coupling-pins. The bo kept his ears up; he was watching something. In front of the station some one went about, as though he was making his night rounds. He looked like a bull; you could tell 'em, smell 'em out; they saw him go over to the brakeman and say a few words. It seemed as if he was giving him some dope on the q.t. and pointing in their direction. Then he disappeared; it seemed phony.

A bit later, the engine was making for the curve; the freight was made up; the bo flew for it; Lorry went for the box car right behind the coal dinky. As

he stood up to look outside and behind him he got out of the corner of his eye a green lantern moving across the top as though suspended on wire; then something glittery in the dark, a splash of mercury in a dish. Something went out of him; it was the bull coming down with a pistol in his hand and the brakeman behind him swaying down from one box car to the other. Lorry jumped, made for the coupling-pins of a sidetracked freight in the next track, sidled through, went down again, fumbled in through the open door of a solitary refrigerating car, and caught, before he had time to think, a passenger moving through the depot yards. He was in the blinds between the baggage and mail car. He stood there, motionless, the wind out of him, the cinders flying back at him; he seemed to hang there; the night and wheels pounding back at him; his eyes on the look-out; the engine-piston kept pointing back at him, like the bull's automatic. But he was moving on, raket ing past the cross-tracks, beyond the night watchman's signal lanterns and empty, sidetracked Pullmans. He looked behind him; the morgue had gone out of him; he had lit out of Salt Lake.

Lorry got as far as some big railroad junction; he didn't know just where it was; a bull coming down in front of the depot shot a flashlight in his face and said he'd run him in if he didn't clear out of town in a jiffy. Lorry got off, asked the bull which way the Lincoln Highway was, and walked out of the place. It must have been close to 3 in the morning. Anyway, he was on a fast mail; so he must have made

good time. Walking the Lincoln Highway the rest of the night, he was unable to get a hitch. No one was going to be fool enough to give a bo a lift at that hour; too many cars being swiped; newspapers were full of it. He stopped in front of some gas stations on the way, but had no luck.

About 7 in the morning he reached the next town; a section gang was working on the roadbed; there wasn't much to the place except a roundhouse, a general grocery store, and some Union Pacific shanties for the road gang. Dead broke, he thought he could see the inside lining of his stomach turned outside. The town looked poorer than a Missouri farmer; no use trying to panhandle there. If there was only a pump somewhere he might stave himself up a bit with a drink of running water. But there was nothing in sight, not even hoss piss. He sat on the freight platform waiting; he couldn't move on; he had to stick right there even if it got him pinched by some hick bull in those parts. Nothing came by all morning, except a passenger going in the opposite direction, and it didn't stop. It was a hell of a joint to get out of; it looked to him like he was stuck there for good. He tried to stand up; he felt if he moved he would vomit; he tried to doze off, pulled his cap down over his eyes, and breathed in and out.

Toward the latter part of the afternoon, he woke up thinking he was in the Kansas City stockyards. Some cattle cars had pulled up; they squeezed, and came to a dead stop. He moved over, dragging along beside the track to the end of the freight. He saw

nobody about; straw and cattle dung woke him up like a dose of smelling salts. Their heads stuck through the wooden bars, they tramped up the dust, as though they were being herded from one pen to the other. He thought of the Kansas City stockyards; the blacksmith outside the gate in front of which many a sucker had drawn a nag shot with arsenic. They never did get over the blacksmith stall in that stupid anvil chorus they pulled off in one of those Italian operas. He had heard it once in Cleveland after he had gotten out of the orphanage; it was his first opera; but he had a foretaste of that kind of stuff when those Euclid Avenue dames came to trill hightone concert bunk. It was stale molasses with flies stuck in it; some of those composers ought to go out and pitch horseshoes; they ought to do something, he felt, in order to keep away from music.

He noticed as he got down a ways a caboose coupled to the freight; it was tied up for a bit, lucky for him, maybe, in that Union Pacific—hole of a place. There was a stockman with one foot on the steps, jabbering away at the brakeman.

"She'll be pullin' out right soon, now, boss," spoke the brakeman going off in the direction of the engine.

Lorry had always gotten on well with cattleranchers and the old duffers who hung around stables and hosses; but now that he wanted something, he didn't know how to break into a conversation. Getting in on the good side of people wasn't his strong point. The stockman whizzed into the track-dust a spit of tobacco juice, and looked him over in an off-hand

manner, as though he was bargaining for a head of cattle he was pretending not to be overmuch interested in. Jerkily, the cattle cars hit back on their coupling-pins, the livestock rose above the din like a jigsaw, and the freight started to move. The stockman, looking about to see that the brakeman was well out of sight, heyed, "Hop on, son." Lorry caught onto the rail, falling down on the steps, his legs giving way under him.

"You kin take yerself a seat on the bunk inside if yer tired, son. Where you bound fer?" asked the stockman, wadding the quid on one side of his mouth into a ball, so as not to appear to be buttin' into another fellow's business.

"As far as I can go," answered Lorry.

"We're set for Portland. You kin bunk in the caboose fer the night. We oughter be in around 10 or 11 in the morning if we make good time. I guess you 'pear honest."

"Thanks very much. That'll help a great deal. It looked like I was stuck for good."

Toward 6 the stockman took out a couple of Swiss-cheese sandwiches, poured some hot coffee out of a thermos bottle, which he divided with him.

"Ain't much on eatin' on train trips. Always upsets my stomach."

Lorry had to get up and make for the caboose water-closet no sooner had he gulped down the sandwich and coffee as he couldn't hold it. Coming back to the bunk, green in the face, the stockman said, "You look sick, boy. What's ailin' ya?"

"Just irregular feedin'. Couldn't hang onto the cheese, I guess."

About 10.30 the next morning they got into the Portland, Oregon stockyards. The stockman took him into a restaurant and treated him to two fried eggs, sunnyside up, hot muffins and coffee, and asked him if he wanted to keep him company to Seattle, which was only a hundred miles from Portland. That was as far as he was going; a much livelier town than Portland, he said. But that was out of Lorry's way; and besides he wasn't keen about the canneries of Seattle.

After he went off he wondered why he hadn't touched him for a couple of bucks; it wouldn't have broke him by a long shot; and it would sure have given him a helping hand. Well, the day was young yet, and he might land something right away. Funny he had never been able to connect as camp flunkey; if he could get off to a logging camp for a season he might lay aside a little money. But then, even if he could stick it out, what was the good; he would only eat it up on bed and grub and a few shows. He could see he'd never get anywhere; but he didn't know that he wanted to; or how to if he did. Perhaps, he might as well have stayed in Kansas City; but what could he have done there; herdin' cattle in the stockyards didn't lead to anything; he was no nervy salesman, that was as clear as day; and he didn't have any money to be one of those college dudes. They had it easy all right. Nothing to do but to study books and sit on their rumps in classrooms; and then go

out and get into banks or go into business with their dads. A fellow had to have connections; that was all there was to it, unless he was one of those grinding wheels. Those fellows who worked themselves up—up to what? Well, he didn't know what he would ever do; he wasn't the kind that would ever amount to anything. He could sure see that.

Well anyway, he had to get a job, even if it was one of those stale jackass businesses draining greasy dishes under a scalding faucet, wiping 'em, washing 'em; always those goddam dishes till he thought his nerves, for the ache and fidgetiness they caused him, would drive him insane. He didn't know whether the country owed him a living; he didn't go in much for politics or socialism, whatever they called it. He had read some of Jack London a little, once tried "The Dream of Debs," but didn't quite get it. "Martin Eden" was better than a movie thriller; he'd have to read some of those books mentioned. He wished he knew enough to be a writer; it was funny he had never thought of that before; he liked it when his mother used to say, "he's always got his nose in a book." He knew he wanted to do some sort of work, but not the kind with somebody over you. To be a lone wolf, hit the trail by himself, that was what he wished. Maybe, he would get on yet; at least he felt he had a cue.

Around noon he was on as a busboy in a cafeteria; he had never seen so many cafeterias in his life. They looked like overgrown bathrooms to him. All those tiles right next to your table was enough to make any

one sick. Portland was a slow town, no doubt about it; Christ, time would never pass if he had to stand on his feet all day. If there was at least a noon rush, he could forget himself, wheeling back and forth from the tables to the kitchen trays of dishes and glasses smeared with breaths and standing water.

In the afternoon he had to mop the linoleum. That was backbreaking; and he had a good mind to tell the proprietor that he had been hired as a busboy and not a chambermaid. But he knew how far that gaff would get him. He wished he were a waiter; he had never risen to waiterdom; there was something neat and snappy about a dish-juggler. The boss always seemed to have more respect for them. They often wore swallowtails or English-looking black vests and got tips and afternoons off. Balancing a tray of dishes from the kitchen to the dining room, remembering the orders by heart, pouring the coffee without spilling it on the white tablecloth, all that appeared to require months working around a restaurant and getting broken in.

He went over these things as he stooped over to rinse out the floormop; he was on an eight-hour shift; it wasn't quite 3.30; there would be supper to get over with before he was let out. Looking through the cafeteria window, the sense of bleak fall over the sidewalks, the light topcoats, an occasional velour, was in his eyes and chest. Well-dressed pedestrians smartly clacking along, going to the office, the film of the free air over their closeshaven faces, made him feel blue; November had a way of chilling one's

bones and getting a bit of futility into one's blood. For a moment he almost wanted to be domesticated, cooped up in straw like poultry for the winter or stabled warmly in barny manure like livestock. Boing did appear to be a purple-fingered, desolate affair, leaving one out in the cold. He had better move on soon now, get his tramping over with, and settle in orange Los Angeles. Douching the mop in the water-bucket, he slowly and drowsily did the rest of the linoleum, not thinking of the passing time, till the five o'clock early birds started to straggle in for a salad and a glass of milk.

Later, untying his apron strings and slipping out of his white coat-jacket and into his shoddy coat, he approached the proprietor. He told him he was flat and asked him for his day's wages. He went to the cash register, handed him two green one-dollar bills and a half buck, and looked as though he didn't expect Lorry to show up again. Lorry on his way for a hotel room went into a secondhand store and bought two pairs of lisle socks for thirty-five cents. Then he rented a single room for the night for six bits, washed his cindery, trackdusty feet in the basin under the hot-running water, threw his old socks out the back window, and put on the new pair. It was too early to turn in; and, besides, he hadn't had a chance to see the town.

Suddenly, as he was going along, the evening air not overcold, it occurred to him that he was practically on the warm, west coast. Portland was on the Columbia River, the Columbia Salmon, which emp-

tied into the Pacific. As he was walking through the rushy, theater section of Portland, the young janes, in a rather light get-up for November, their tailored skirts breezily swirling and gently rising above the knees while walking at a sociable pace, gave him his first feel of the coast. He got an orchestra seat at the box office of the Columbia Burlesque. He was just in time; the orchestra was playing in a dreamy, love-movie swing, "There's a long, long trail awinding into the land of my dreams."

The exterior asbestos curtain, reproduction of the downtown section of Portland photographed on it, was slowly rising. People were coming in taking seats; usherettes—they were just becoming the theater fashion—dressed as bellhops, were passing out programs. Some kid, who looked like the chocolate soldier, was calling out, "Salted peanuts, Lowney chocolates, bonbons, Hershies." The chandeliers above, like heavy cut-glass, disappeared as the foot-lights put an edge on the gilt, Louis Quinze boxes.

The night started in with a peppery pony revue; fleshtone tights and some high kicking, a Jewish comedian in a New York derby began the funny-faced stuff; the star came down a staircase, doffed her cape, and did a waltz duet with the leading man, throwing in a few acrobatic stunts to trick up the tempo. The between-the-act chatter, the necking in the dark, the Portland janes, who looked fast, out in the aisles, flipping back above their stockinged knees bits of silk slips, warmed him considerably. Two cute chorines, the hit of the evening, in tulle

that just grazed the thighs on which the lighting reflector in back played pastel colors, tooted through long paper horns, "Coax me, come on and coax me, If you want me badly, love me madly . . ." were great. They had the audience, no getting around that; they were peaches; and when they tossed their bobbed heads, the lustre of brilliantine on them, and cooed again, as a soft pink from the colored glass in back moved over the linear valley of their chicken-breasts, "Coax me, come and coax me, I'll be your tootsie wootsie, If you'll coax me," it made him wish he had one of them on a parlor sofa. Just to pet with and nervously touch would be enough; he wouldn't have to go too far, he thought, and it would ease up that black hollowness in him a little.

When the show was out, he hung around the stage-door for a while; it was ridiculous, he knew that, but it suited his mood, and who could tell, maybe, he might make a chance acquaintance with some lonesome kid who wanted a little company, wanted to pass the time away, and he coaxed for a squeeze or a kiss. He went back to the hotel, undressed, and turning out the light, almost wished he hadn't gone to the burlesque. They were too exciting; made him long for things he couldn't have.

He lasted three days at the cafeteria; the monotony of busing dishes on an eight-hour shift wasn't for him, he decided. The next day he loafed about; footed it to the residential parts of the city; he wanted to see some of those winter roses he heard grew in Portland. Too, he wanted his fill of the sun;

he had been missing that for a few days; he felt his pastimes were too limited to give up his walks, foolin' in the late five-o'clock sunlight if he had a mind to.

About 4 he stopped in front of a buttermilk stand to get a drink and a sandwich, and noticing a sign, "fountain man wanted" asked for the job. He really didn't want it, but he felt he could use some extra change; and besides, getting on as soda-squirt might mean a rise in the world for him. Anyway, it was a new thing, as far as he was concerned; he had heard that drugstore fountain men got as much as forty per week. This might be a start. At midnight, the close of his shift, he got his day's wages, and instead of returning directly to the hotel, he went toward the Columbia. The night river air, blowing in his face, edged him up a bit; the itch for boing on was at him again; he would hit out for Frisco. . . .

CHAPTER XI

FRISCO

There was a big parade of sailors on Market Street; he had never gone in very much for the navy; he had seen enough of the U.S. fleet in those goddam newsreelers. Anyway, all that fleetfuss couldn't stave off the hollow ache in his belly. Still, the brass bands flaring up, the old Sousa military marches, people standing on the edges of orange boxes, all that faked-up carnival gaiety reminded him of Indian summer in Kansas City; it brought back the Priest of Palace Parades excitement and made him reminiscent enough to pipe down the minor music. There was something in the Frisco air, a briny keenness, that keyed one up to a ridiculous, enthusiastic pitch; things stood out, blue-veined, etched, there was a hitting pace behind what one felt: Market Street had a go. The Sausalito ferry, Oakland, Telegraph Hill, Post Street, Newbegin's Bookshop—they had the run and the salt of the seaweed air behind them. He liked Frisco, he wished he could live there: San Francisco was a Scotchmist light tweed topcoat on his back . . . the windy Chicago of the coast, a grey *Times* flapping up against the curb blued by late autumn. By night the tars had cut loose; it was a great day for the Market Street whores and the movies; the lunch counters were overcrowded, and it looked like a Mardi Gras at all the dance halls.

Barbary Coast couldn't complain either; they always did business rain or shine.

Standing in front of the sailors' and army men's hotel which overlooked the shipping docks, he walked a half block up and down to keep warm; waiting for a tar or a khaki-shirt to come out, he felt like a rundown whore who did her soliciting on dark streets so that no one could see her face. That day he had noticed hordes of them on Market Street; one couldn't miss them, outside the moviedens, around the corners of sporting hotels; and God, their hands, he had chanced upon a pair patting out her fat skirt at the hips—whorish hands, ruin in them, like the cobblestones around the wharves, scurf peeling . . . Oh, hell, that wouldn't get him anywhere; he crept up the flight of steps into the hotel. The clerk at the desk didn't bother to look his way; he sat down in the lobby next to a sailor playing checkers with a woman. Another couple, a sailor and a woman, who looked as though they were tied up for the night, were side-rooters. They puffed cigarette smoke over the checkerboard. Looked like a Salvation Army hotel to him; wonder why he hadn't thought of going there. After a bit he went down; there was no sense hollowing out his cheeks any more watching the U.S. fleet play checkers with the gash of Frisco.

Toward midnight, he happened into Barbary Coast, all decked out like an amusement park, tricked up for the tourist and the Iowans by the sea as the Californians spotted them. Everything wide open; they

beat Kansas City all hollow. Pushing up against a pair of bar swinging doors, he walked into a combination boozing joint and dance hall. Sailors were strutting close up to their partners; one couldn't dodge them; there was a rickety balcony strung around the place; at the tables next to the rails the customers drank bootleg whiskey with the housewhores who got a rake-off from the proprietor for every bottle they uncorked. The younger-'uns weren't half bad; they were neatly primped, flashily underclothed and seemed to light up the joint like Japanese lanterns; the oldtimers, who had seen their best days, brought in the steady trade, the longshoremen and wharf-hands who wanted a bit of sensible company to open up to; they took their time; they weren't transients, fellows from out of town. Lorry stood around taking it all in; when the nigger jazz band was at their pop and the legshaking had stopped a bit, a crazy player piano was clinking away. He looked up into the gallery at some of the reliable duffers, scattered here and there between tables occupied by tars. They were steady customers, and their faces seemed to have aged and rotted away like the sideboards. How long had he been boing? It appeared ages, what had happened to his bones, his hands, his cells, some of his hair had fallen out; the thought of it made him creepy. All those empty bottles about had something of the damp must of a cellar; that got into him.

He went outside for a moment to get breath, and made for the corner; the street lights were a relief; they had a white immaculate glow about them, clean

as a meerschaum pipe; tobacco leaves, cigar stores always had a pleasant, fresh young smell; it was an escape to think about that now, to get away from the Barbary Coast decay. But it was cold at the corner, he couldn't bunk there, it looked too cheap and down-and-out to hope to panhandle a few coppers for a bed. Gad, what a business, panhandling, he wasn't even good at that; would he ever get out of all this?

With that he swung through the door again and watched the customers at tables chewing bonbons or nibbling away at sandwiches. For a time he stood looking at one customer, who appeared to be one of the steadies of the joint; he might be able to touch him for the price of a feed. Finally, he half-nudged him, speaking low as though he didn't want to hear it himself, "Mister, I'm flat, could you help me out? . . ."

He stopped short, wanting to get out of the door before he got one of those wisecracking answers. The fellow turned out to be a Swede; one of those wharf-hands, the housewhores always said about "Swanson, would geeve his last shirt when he's drunk." Swanson took him over to the counter and reeked in his face, while he tried to get the attention of the bartender, "Geeve the boy sumethin' to eat and drink."

After that they went out together, the Swede's arm about him, Lorry uncomfortable, and wanting to ditch him at the street corner.

Out in front of his hotel the Swede said he'd put him up for the night; he had a clean room and a bed big enough for two. Lorry went up the stairs with

him, wishing he had beat it, but feeling a little relieved in the warm hall. He unlocked the door for him, turned on the switch, and moved over toward the window while the old dockhand got out of his suspenders and thumped down his clodhoppers. Standing inside, the radiator steam over his eyes, the cold outside had an appeal for him, and he almost wished he was out again gettin' the night briskness in his blood—away from that dockhand's jabber. Lorry turned out the light and undressed, getting as near the edge of the bed as possible, heaping up stealthily in a sort of mound between them the bedspread so that he could get off by himself and doze off. But the dockhand kept backing up against him, as though to get warm. He really wanted to get out, get into his clothes, pretending that he was going to the toilet. But the blankets wrapped around were like the spitting flames in a fireplace flushing his limbs. A comfortable bed to lie in for a change was wine going to his head.

Suddenly, he started up, the feel of something against him, his body in a sluice of sweat; the dockhand was whining after him as he jumped into a pair of pants, got into his shoes without tying the shoe-strings, and went out through the door, and down the hall steps like a streak. Not stopping till he was some blocks distant, he felt his pants for a handkerchief to wipe his nose running from the cold. Then he came to; the pants, corduroy, almost dropped off him. For a moment he thought of going back; but he couldn't put himself in for that. In the other

pocket he felt something bumpy; there was an oily, beer-besmeared wallet with five worn-thin-as-a-halloween-mask singles. There was no time to lose; he skidded around the street corner, slowed up a bit going by a cop, and slewed into the mick section of Frisco. He got a hotel room and turned in right away.

A few minutes later, he heard a small rap at the door; he stood still, his ears out of the bedsheet. It came again; balls, could that soused Swede have followed him, or rung a police alarm? That corner cop had sort of twisted his mouth up into a bit of pinchedmeat, when he saw him passing by. He waited; it seemed as though it had gone. Maybe it was that whore standing out front, who tried to stop him, as he went into the hotel. He had hardly noticed her, looking awfully deaconlike after that Swanson wharfhand.

CHAPTER XII

L. A. THE Y. M. C. A.

Lorry had gotten a room in the Y.M.C.A. just as the director had kicked off; there were hymns in the lobby; the sixty-seven-year-old corpse, nattily spruced up in a Sunday-school suit was lying in a coffin with a glass top. There were lots of ferns and flowers shading him; some one was playing the upright piano in a minor tempo trying to get over the resonance of a church organ. Upstairs, on a kind of mezzanine balcony, a codger with a black cloth patch over one eye was playing checkers furtively with a ninety-two-year-old Christian Scientist who was argumentative and always carried a winning heavy bulldog cane. The time of checking in didn't appear propitious to Lorry, as he wasn't keen on funerals or corpses pickled by undertakers and exposed for the general view of the curious-mongers, as Don Quixote might put it.

As a matter of fact, he had checked in the night before, and had only managed to persuade the desk-secretary to let him have a room in the Y.M.C.A. on the condition that he would plank down his five dollars for a membership card the following week. The secretary, however, wasn't taken in, as Lorry had been lounging about the entire evening in the lobby with some other bums. They hadn't been bothering anybody, but the desk-secretary didn't

think they were a show for the Y.M.C.A., and asked them to leave. One guy, who had just drifted in from Chi, and who was a little more hardboiled than the rest, said the whole Y.M.C.A. outfit could kiss his ass, if he hadn't thought so much of his ass. Well, the secretary, who wasn't a specialist in such matters, kept edging the bums toward the doorway; he sort of talked them out, without so much as grazing them; for that was just what the bo from Chi was itching for. Moreover, he said he wasn't going to close his trap for nobody; he hadn't been in the army for nuthin'; not paid half his government checks for the krappy cigarettes them social secs palmed off on the fellows in the trenches.

Well, the ex-soldier from Chi and overseas went along with the rest. During the brawl Lorry moved over to the desk, hoping to get out of the secretary's sight; but he spotted him right off, and as soon as Lorry asked if there was any vacancy, he shot out pointblank whether he had a membership card. Just as the interview was about to end, a rather tallish fellow, who was as slim as a camel, tapped Lorry on the shoulder, and gave him one of those strong-character handshakes. Max Maxwell, who had been in the orphanage with Lorry, told the secretary he would vouch for him; if that was so, he didn't mind, he said, if he wanted to put Lorry up for the night in his room. Tomorrow, there would most likely be a vacancy on the floor above.

Max Maxwell was a Y.M.C.A. member, a Mason, had founded the American Legion Post in Los

Angeles, gone to David Starr Jordan's peace lectures, and read Samuel Butler and Epictetus with considerable conviction. After he had left the orphanage in Cleveland, he had been a tree surgeon somewhere in Maine; he had beat it out of New York for various personal and subtle legal reasons, sold land precariously near the Pacific and below sea level. Like his father, Jeremy Maxwell, who had shipped most of his kids to the orphanage, in order to lay aside money for oil stocks and imitation rubber patents, which never panned out, Max had his speculative side too. Of all the chances he had taken none had ever turned out well except those with women; so far he had managed to escape the syph, although he often said he sure deserved it. He was a reader of sorts, had taken up Romain Rolland, Mary Baker Eddy, Huxley, and reincarnation with earnestness. He had his moral and aesthetic side also; he thought L.A. was badly in need of high-class musical concerts, and started a series at the Ambassador Hotel, but as the hotel guests went to the movies instead, he had to skip town for a bit, as the artistes had brought suit against him for nonpayment.

After that he had gotten an employee, who had been under him in a ladies' apparel house, out of a hole. At the time Max Maxwell was on his last legs and passed most of his time looking at the daily papers for opportunities. Under a newspaper heading, "Long Beach business man assaults boy in hotel," he read that Mortimer Gray, proprietor of smart ladies' apparel shop in Long Beach, was out on

heavy bail pending trial for charges brought against him by a fourteen-year-old boy. Max Maxwell remembered him quite well; as not more than eighteen months back Mortimer Gray had come to him for business advice. Max Maxwell thought at the time he might pick up some extra change; so he went about with him getting a location for a smart ladies' apparel shop in one of the resorts not more than thirty to forty-five minutes from L.A. on the Pacific Electric line. Max Maxwell finally secured a lease for him in Long Beach; the location was dandy, overlooking the main boardwalk across from the bandstand, where music was played every afternoon; the shop was in a new, two-story brick building; it was in the center of heavy traffic, the Pacific Electric line's terminus at a right angle from it. Then he opened up Mortimer Gray's books, and for some reason didn't take anything for his time and counsel. He hadn't known just why. Mortimer Gray had offered him forty dollars, and Max Maxwell had pushed his hand back. Accepting forty dollars would have been a comedown, perhaps, that was it, he recollected, going back over the situation. Anyway, the fellow was close; since then the business had quadrupled its original value; on a sport awning, "Gray's Exclusive Ladies' Apparel" meant something expensively fashionable to the smart resorter; and thinking back that, as he read more minutely the article, he resolved he wouldn't do anything this time for nothing. Of course, the fellow hadn't

written him, as he was no doubt ashamed of his predicament.

When Max Maxwell came upon the scene, it looked like twenty years in pen., moral disgrace, and possible bankruptcy for Mortimer Gray. He had already paid out a cool fifteen hundred to a criminal lawyer, and he hadn't had a decent break for it yet. Gray was tickled to see Max Maxwell; he believed in his healing powers and in Max Maxwell, who with some sort of vague, mystical notion about their therapeutic efficacy went to work on that belief. Gray, who felt he was done for, promised Max Maxwell his business and anything he wanted, if he got him out of the scrape and hushed up the matter so that his old man wouldn't get wind of it.

After Gray signed over his business and checking account to him, Max Maxwell started off by dismissing the criminal lawyer. After that he bribed some one higher up connected with the police court to fire the d. t., who was pressing the charges, for permitting a bootleg joint to operate in his district. Then Max Maxwell accumulated more facts; a tar, who was supposed to have come to the boy's rescue, while he was being assaulted in a hotel room, seemed to be mixed up in the affair, admitted halfway that the boy was a bit old for his age; and upon a promise of court immunity and some collateral, the sailor testified that the affair had been framed for the susceptible defendant as a means of extorting money, but that the defendant had not been quite so susceptible to threats.

Anyway, things were moving too smooth for Max Maxwell's own good; Mortimer Gray, seeing how the land lay, began to get cold feet, and offered Max Maxwell a position as manager in his shop instead of the business. That riled Max Maxwell; and although he hadn't cut in very deep into the checking account signed over to him, he borrowed more or less permanently a complete wardrobe for the wench he was living with. Then to make the case appear stiff, he walked Mortimer Gray over the state line and advised him to remain there in hiding for the next six months; but he came back after three weeks and said he wanted to go on with his business again. Well, Max Maxwell could have doublecrossed him, and proved that the sailor's testimony was false; the sailor was willing to swear both ways upon request; but Max Maxwell didn't, he shrugged his shoulders; there was no use becoming too analytical.

Mortimer Gray noticed that some of his smartest dresses, and two of his most expensive furs were missing; he mentioned them, but Max Maxwell only smiled; he couldn't help that. After that Mortimer Gray became very vigilant; the shop seemed to have gotten stuffy; Max Maxwell didn't know how he had stood it all that time. When Gray asked him with ostensible timidity to sign back the business and the checking account to him, Max Maxwell did it, he didn't know why. Business was slowing down too, said Gray, and he didn't believe the shop could stand any more overhead at that time; perhaps, later, it would pick up. He offered Max Maxwell four tens;

he took them, and went back to his wench who was just recuperating from an abortion and was now taking piano lessons to pass the time away.

Max Maxwell was fond of her in a sort of detached way; when he was general office manager of a large ladies' apparel house, much patronized on precarious charge accounts by movie stars, he had helped her out of a mess. She had made one of those war-time marriages, which blew up after the parades were over, as her ex-soldier couldn't readjust himself to employment after the trenches. She was the head bookkeeper in the office; she liked Max Maxwell's affability and didn't mind the pimples on his face.

One day she came into his private office, and asked him if she might confide in him: she said her husband from whom she was illegally separated followed her to her apartment every evening with the purpose of forcibly resuming marital relations. Although Maxwell didn't believe in making dates with girls in the office, he felt some sort of disinterested protection should be afforded the bookkeeper. He assisted her in getting a divorce, and though he wished to continue the detached interest he found himself living with her with more permanency than he desired.

She had inherited pretty bums from her mother who lived in Davenport, Iowa, and a lowdown sullenness from her father who had committed suicide. He had tried to leave her on several occasions, and always with indifferent success. Once he went in hiding and stayed with a Y.M.C.A. chambermaid whose

breasts he thought weren't bad, although she was almost forty. The chambermaid was kind-hearted: she let him sleep with her fifteen-year-old daughter who had fine calves and limped a bit; but Max Maxwell stroked her hair and felt that she was too young to be carnally disturbed. Later, in one of her evening strolls in Echo Park, to which she was habitually given, she got v.d. and had to be sent to a sanatorium besides for t.b. . . . Max Maxwell, who afterwards slept with the chambermaid, was somewhat retrospectively uncertain: he didn't know. The bookkeeper, who had an uncanny intuition about his predilections, found him out, and did picket duty in front of the wooden frame cottage until he came out and returned to her.

Then they moved to a room upstairs on Flower Street off 7th. Max Maxwell was an old friend of the landlady, who was separated from her husband and who supported herself by renting out rooms in her three-story frame house. The bookkeeper, who suspected that their past intimacy had more than a sociable garrulousness, renewed her ardor with increasing alarm. Max Maxwell, whose vanity in such matters was touched, accepted her challenge, and a contest ensued the like of which would put the vengeance of Kriemhild to shame. Although she was caught twice, there was no letting up until Maxwell noticed in the looking-glass, while shaving, signs of frontal baldness. Then he advised a trip to the mountains for her health and forthwith despatched her to a camp, while he remained on Flower Street

to wash his hair in salt water. She had gone to the Arroya Secco Canyon to Switzer's Camp, but before the first week was up she wrote that she was lonesome and came back before he answered.

Max Maxwell, in his peregrinations, had lost all track of his brothers and one sister with the exception of Charlie, a L.A. mechanic, who had been conscripted into the navy. During his absence Max Maxwell looked out for his wife, and she had a baby, which as it grew older, showed increasing avuncular traits. The Maxwells had drifted apart and didn't appear to give a tinker's damn for each other for all one member of that family knew of the next one.

CHAPTER XIII

THE AFTER BIBLE COFFEE CLASS

The director who had kicked off hadn't made any noticeable difference in the running of the Y.M.C.A. The Y.M.C.A. auto school carried on relentlessly: the employment bureau continued to function for a collateral five-dollar membership card, although the ninety-year-old Scientist playing checkers with the fellow with the black patch over one eye, said that Mrs. Baynton, the placement adviser, hadn't been up to the mark ever since that cartilage operation on her nose. However, her hubbie, Alec Baynton, who played the cornet at the after Bible coffee class, was doing very well in the bowling alleys next to the gym. The cafeteria, too, in the basement, still kept up its rep for fine and dandy filet of sole with tartar sauce, and the man who ran the soda fountain and hotdog stand in the lobby said that business was never better.

Although the secretary at the desk was always on the verge of having those bums, who did nothing all day but warm their rumps on the cane chairs, thrown out, it helped the lobby stand out considerably. Of course, he never said that, but the younger Walsh said it was clear as day, as he ought to know, since he had a milkshake and a hotdog almost every day the first week in every month. The after Bible coffee class had never seemed so vital: of course,

there was no getting round it; Doctor Ditmuth, who was the house physician and had almost fixed Jack Gray for keeps after one of his surgical performances, was as dry as boiled radishes in his sermons, still there was Alec Baynton with his well-polished cornet that sort of set it off just when the junior members were getting sweaty about the groins.

Then winter was on: the L.A. air had something of Frisco in it, and it was considerably comforting to huddle together in the not overspacious room, and get the steam and beany flavor of hot coffee up against one's cheeks, the skin of which had been dried and somewhat soured by the outside morning. Although the Christian Scientist church was right opposite the Y building the congregation that came together to hear Dr. Ditmuth and sociably drink coffee and pack away crullers clearly showed the Protestant buddies were sticking together.

More than that, there were a lot of adherents of Christ Science there also. The ninety-two-year-old Scientist, with the argumentative bulldog stick, was six games in the lead of his opponent with the black cloth patch over the left eye and the latter as a result had become somewhat middling in his Protestantism which at the beginning of their checker tournament had been considerably in his bones. Moreover, the Scientist who attributed his longevity and his dexterity in pushing the red discs onto the right squares to faith in healing attended the after Bible coffee class regularly every Sunday morning at eleven sharp with his opponent, not because of

any predilection for doughnuts, but as a means of abetting religious liberality.

Then there was the Christ Scientist, Sol Baker—known as C Sharp Minor at one of Grauman's Theaters, where he conducted the movie orchestra—who played the violin free of charge at the services. His altruism appeared unmotivated, and his religious proselytism among the junior members of the Y.M.C.A. was looked upon with increasing favor, until one night, when he negligently omitted to lock the door of his room fast, the watchman trying it, noted that he had been lying too intimately with one of the more youthful frequenters of the after Bible coffee class.

Also, two of the three Walsh brothers never missed a Sunday morning service: they got a kick out of the humanly ridiculous toots that Mr. Baynton blew out of his well-polished cornet and didn't mind stuffing their pockets and bellies with as many doughnuts as they could grab. The desk-secretary, who would have liked to have told them to get their feeds in the basement cafeteria, didn't know how to go about it, as he didn't know just how to reconcile it with the Bible talk Dr. Ditmuth had given on brotherhood and "thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's ass or his." . . .

Anyway, the eldest Walsh, who affected a moustache, a cap, a khaki shirt, and read "Thus Spake Zarathustra" in the lobby, lived on a raw food diet, and stayed away on principle. For a time he had given up the lobby altogether to avoid the nosey lobby-loungers from butting into his private affairs.

As a matter of fact, he had lost, not more than a month back, one of his brothers. He was next in years to himself; the coffee and crullers, though a help, had not prevented the development of a pernicious form of tuberculosis. Quietly, after the diagnosis had been pronounced and the eldest Walsh had been satisfied it could be nothing else, he took him out to the California hills, somewhere in the outskirts of Pasadena, where he pitched a shabby canvas tent, and nursed his ailing brother on fresh air, fieldy sunlight, and the benefits of a raw food diet which consisted mostly of nuts and dates. Notwithstanding the rigor and devotion with which the eldest of the Walshes attended him, the tubercular kicked off in a few weeks: he seemed to have gone off with a sort of gallop.

After his demise, a number of Y.M.C.A. members from whom he had panhandled quarters with various success, recollected how he used to stand about on the sidewalk in front of the basement cafeteria, his rather brown, woody hair, which fell in strips over his coat collar, making his back appear as though it was actually hunched instead of pensively stooped. He was not really a Y member; he used his older brother's membership card whenever he wanted to take a shower, as he could never have spared five bucks for such nonsense. He managed to get by, though not with success, doing extra work in mob scenes at three bones per day in Hollywood. Too weak to do anything else he sponged upon anyone he could, his brothers helping him out when-

ever they were able. He lived a few doors down opposite Robinson's Department Store in the garret which an Irish landlady rented out to him at a dollar a week. He wrote some poetry there which had a mystic bent.

The youngest Walsh, who got a twenty-two dollar monthly pension from a Dayton, Ohio traction company for the loss of sight in one eye, went in for meat whenever he could get it; though he didn't go in much for books, he liked munching dates and hazelnuts while listening to his oldest brother talk about Nietzsche. He spent much of his time sitting against the brass railing going down the front stone steps of the Y, where he could blah with a newsie or watch a well-turned leg as it tapped by the sidewalk between 5 and 6 after office hours.

He still had a romance in his life which he had told in confidence to Nat Robinson who sold silk jazz shirts to Y members on the side at an amazingly low price. He could still get hot in the face, he told Nat, whenever he got to thinking about the jane back in Dayton, whom he almost had to marry.

"Gee!" he nudged up closer to Nat Robinson, who afterwards got the clap and told the Y fellows he thought he'd let the matter drop awhile. "When I saw her get on a street car, her skirt whisking up above her calves, I couldn't help but say to myself that little queen is nobody's fool!"

When the youngest Walsh's monthly pension from the traction company was about to peter out, which was usually about a week after he had gotten it, he

tried his hand at stud poker and blackjack up in room 714 which started with eats and ended up with the Bible when the night watchman came rapping at the door to find out what the hell they were tearing up about. There were around ten Y fellows who tried living off one another playing penny ante poker. The youngest Walsh was pretty careful, and when he had a streak of luck, managed to walk off with two bucks. Ruddy Franklin, who was born in the north of Germany and still remembered some of his platt-deutsch, wasn't so good; he was still a beginner but showed promise. He had run away from home in St. Louis, because his father, who had driven a brewery wagon before prohibition and been out of work much of the time ever since, kept driving him to practice his violin so that he could make money.

Franklin had been employed as a sort of general handy boy in the gym and handball courts of the Los Angeles Athletic Association on 7th Street, but as the manager felt his property sense had never been developed he canned him. After that upon the recommendation of Max Maxwell he was taken into the employ of the Southern California Music and Record Company and was almost given the air again because of his renewed interest in sheet music for the violin and his predilection for the latest Victor records. However, upon the intercession of Max Maxwell he was continued on their payroll though on probation. As the boss was a Mason, Max Maxwell was able to smooth things over.

About this time a situation had arisen which caused a great deal of noise around the Y lobby, as Herbert Hibbens, oftentimes referred to by intimates and lobby-loungers as "Herbie, Dear," had gotten himself into a mess, which unfortunately, leaked out. As Herbert Hibbens was quite important in Y affairs, a booster in campaign funds for new buildings and essential annexes for additional Y schools, it was a blow to the executive staff when it got the news out of the daily papers. However, it was no surprise to the junior members of the Y who had often been invited to take a look in at his gay-colored cretonnes, if they ever happened to be on his floor.

Herbert Hibbens, an interior decorator by profession, had made the Y and the Bible Institute, which was just a block and a half down on Hope Street hobbies of his. He liked being pointed out as a regular Y fellow; he was the bottom that held many an entertainment and show together; if a social sec had had to have some interior decorating done in the assembly hall upstairs he first thought of that awfully helpful Y man, Herbert Hibbens. It was at the Bible Institute—his second hobbyhorse—that Herbert Hibbens had a visitor up in his room which he rented by the year and occupied when not convenient to be at the Y. However, as the caller was a male, it might not have caused any comment, if it wasn't for the fact that the boy who spent the night with him got an infection and went about talking too much. The affair managed to get into the papers and the entire incident didn't look too good for the

Y. The executive staff of the Y.M.C.A. felt it couldn't afford to let such a thing go by and informed Herbert Hibbens that they had found it advisable to ask him to hereafter forego membership privileges and to seek quarters elsewhere. In addition, a notice was put in the *Los Angeles Times* to the effect that the miscreant had been duly expelled and that in such a tremendous organization as the Young Men's Christian Association such blackguards were bound to filter through. It did not fail to add that at the time that untoward incident occurred, he was not resident on the premises of the Y.M.C.A.

On Sunday night around 9.30 a gang of poker gents, who had been tipped off earlier in the day at the after Bible coffee class, were sitting on the chairs and cot of room 714 occupied by Franklin and Rufus Red, who had drifted into L.A. the next evening after Lorry got in.

Red had gone to the various editorial offices in Brooklyn and advised the dailies that he was going to hike from New York to L.A. They took him as a bit of news, got his views on the subway situation in Manhattan, had him write an article on proper diet, and had out-of-town papers wire them of his progress. Red had gotten some cash in his pocket out of it, numerous hot meals on the way, and flash-light booms from waiting reporters telegraphed in advance of his entry. However, Red admitted to his roommate and to Pett that he had taken lifts from benign drivers when securely distant enough from big towns.

When he got to L.A., and had managed to slip ahead of others on the waiting list by rooming with Franklin, he took up vegetarianism; but as he found that was becoming too common, since there were already four or five such cafeterias in L.A., he went in for a raw food diet. He supported his theory both economically and religiously, as he maintained it was the only way for the underdog to get along in a capitalistic society. Nuts and dates were not only cheap, they had spiritual and uplifting benefits, as they did not clog the stomach and left the mind clear and fresh as air for new ideas to get through. Later, he discarded civilian clothes, went about the streets of L.A. in white linen overalls, and bare feet. He sold bags of hazelnuts on 7th and Main Street across from the Pacific Electric waiting room.

At this point the youngest Walsh guffawed, while Franklin, his nose over his mouth, grinned at Pett who was rubbing his hands, jumping up and down from the cot, letting out squeaky giggles, which the youngest Walsh said, left room for doubt. Hyam Davidd, a British Jew, born in the Singapore Straits Settlement, told Red to go on; there was something to what he said.

Davidd read Emerson and had transcendental leanings and told Max Maxwell during a discussion of Epictetus that never had he seen with such a clear, limpid eye until he had taken enemas, which Haynes, a U.S. veteran who had been gassed and shrapnelled in the Argonne, had suggested. Haynes dropped around occasionally to chat and watch the boys; he

liked to take a hand in a literary argument whenever one came up. A follower of Tolstoi, he stood by "The Death of Ivan Ilytch" through thick and thin. Although he weighed two hundred pounds of solid muscle and could throw the medicine ball around longer than anybody else in the gym he was always complaining of rotten health. He was on confidential terms with Max Maxwell whom he told he had wet dreams which kept him awake at nights. He was a great deal worried about his manhood as he hadn't had intercourse for a number of years. The more he read Schopenhauer, he said, the less vitality he believed he had left. He could tell, he confided in Maxwell, that he was rotting away under his own eyes; he could see no use in getting married as he was probably impotent. A week before he got married he bought a pistol in a secondhand jewelry store, but as his various appetites increased and his wife had a baby that was healthy though a bit early, he hocked it for a crib.

A few minutes after Haynes took a seat on the cot the youngest Walsh was starting to horse with Red and Scotty who had a nine-inch chest expansion. And a two-inch letout elsewhere, Walsh suggested.

Scotty who was usually somewhat slow wanted to know how he was in on the know.

That toned down the youngest Walsh a bit, who a few minutes later turned to Pett, who had been waiting to get in a word or two: "Say, Pett, what's become of that nurse little broad who was hanging

around while you were getting signatures on 7th and Broadway for a Purer California?"

Pett, who had blond hair, a square peasant face, was always Johnny-on-the-spot when it came to spilling his life story.

Franklin said the tailor knew it, the elevatorman was getting the barber's itch listening to it, and if he ever started that blah in his room again he would throw him out.

Notwithstanding Franklin's face, Pett let out a cheery cleancut laugh, rubbed his hands gleefully, and said, "Boys, you can have her, she reminds me too much of the chambermaid I had when I was bellhopping at the Plaza."

"That's a new one, ain't it Pett; you might as well get it out of your kidneys if you've been keeping it that long," said Walsh.

Franklin made an "a-ah!" as though he had just taken down a tablespoonful of castor oil.

"Aw, we heard that one the first day Pett got a room in the Y."

Anyway Pett started with a cackle: "Believe me," he said, "I sure was frightened, I was a bellhop at the Plaza then, making sixty bucks a week; it's sure terrible when you need something. . . ."

At this Max Maxwell, who had just stepped in, went off into a highpitched laugh, as though he was about to fall out of a chair, and then assuming a brisk-like tone greeted, "Good evening, gentlemen and Y.M.C.A. members; I move we lay the table immediately for a hand of klondike."

"Why the goddam nerve of you!" hoarsed back the youngest Walsh.

Maxwell passed that by, dashed down a brand new deck on the deal table and continued, "Pardon me, Pett, for disturbing your story."

Pett went on, "But as I was sayin', the chambermaid, she didn't have any front teeth; when I was with her, I used to shut my eyes tight and bury my face in the pillow. It was just one, two, three. But can you imagine, boys, she says, coming up close to me, 'Pett honey, I haven't been sick for two months.' I said what! 'Pett honey!' I says to myself better be leaving for the coast. So I came here with four hundred bucks in my pocket to be a movie star. I sure was frightened boys, when she said Pett honey! I knew it was good-bye Plaza!"

"How about the little nurse, Pett?" egged on Walsh, "Is she hot stuff?" "Naw," said Pett, "imagine, I took her to Robinson's room; she wore silk pants, with laces around them, and I said at last my dream," gestured Pett in a sentimental movie manner; "I was sure hot for her. Well, I had only been with her twice, when she turned her back on me and she said, 'Pethun, let's not make love any more, let's sleep!' That sure made me sore; so I said to her what the hell was you doin' last night?"

"What was that I hear about your knockin' her up?" asked Scotty.

"Naw, it wasn't me," answered Pett, getting dark, but he brightened up again. "She's in Washington now; it sure looked like I was goin' back to the

Plaza; she came to me and said, 'Pett darlin', I'm pregnant, it must be you.' "

Maxwell spit all over himself laughing, "Pett, you're a menace to all modern contraceptives. There'll be no progress with vital guys like you around."

"Well, who was it, you homebreaker?" came back Walsh.

"Naw, it wasn't me, she was goin' with a doctor who worked for the public health service. But she couldn't get anything on him, so she tried to pin me."

"I'll mark and shuffle the deck," said Maxwell getting crisp again; "you cut, Franklin."

Max Maxwell, who played a highhanded bluff game of klondike and had once dropped four thousand bucks, four years' savings, in Nogales, Sonora, was raking in the pennies.

Rufus Red who usually walked out while he was still winning with a broad grinning "good night boys" looked miserable and kept slivering peanuts which he chewed mechanically to keep his mind off his worries.

Franklin, who was being taken for a long, sweet ride, and was a bit on edge, couldn't help watching Red's sad face with a partly masked grin.

Scotty didn't play, but he was hard on the fresh air squad, and the fellows had to continually open the windows, although it was too crisp out for that.

Pett, who believed in the call of the open road, a philosophy of life he had gotten from an automobile ad, which the Cusack Advertising Company had put

up along the highway, said if he didn't cut it out, he would go out for a walk. But Scotty, lying about like a stuffed moth, kept, although somewhat half-heartedly, taking down dried apricots and English walnuts which Haynes had cracked.

Walsh said he was just trying to spite Haynes.

Pett was neither here nor there and took matters as they came, always rubbing his hands with a squeaky chortle and slapping Franklin on the back.

Franklin, who had just called Max's bluff, when he wasn't bluffin', bristled up away from Pett with an "aw, cut it out, pest!"

Pett sniffed in his breath through his nose, which he fingered and thumbed, making sleight-of-hand Japanese fans at him.

On the cot on a spread-out newspaper were uncracked English walnuts, hazelnuts, dried apricots, uncooked prunes, late peaches and some early hard-as-nut apples all of which the gang had chipped in for.

Haynes sat on the cot up against the cream buff wall unobservantly munching prunes, nuts, and occasionally biting into an apple, spitting out the peelings in to the thick palm of his left hand, while bringing up the right, like a dynamo, to his buck-teeth.

Lorry who had been studying Max Maxwell's game for days was about six bits ahead. They never played against one another although there was no kind of agreement to that effect made.

Walsh was playing a middling klondike, but as he

had just gotten his monthly pension, he didn't mind much as long as he didn't take a sudden drop.

Davidd, whose bowels had just been emptied in the afternoon as a result of an enema, was going at high gear; ahead of the game, he was quoting at great pace lines from Emerson and crunching hazelnuts which he splintered under the table with a nutcracker and the shells of which kept popping up into Pett's face, much to Franklin's amusement.

Franklin, who was beginning to take his rotten luck philosophically, kept looking from Rufus's hurt face to Pett, who kept jerking around every time a shell flipped him on the ear with a "now, who did that?" The game was getting hotter; the dealers in their turn didn't change from klondike; even Davidd toned down a bit although he couldn't help belching.

Pett was running beginner's luck; Walsh who had been playing a rather listless hand was getting all knotted up inside. He seemed to be out of the running; every time he called he put his foot into it and when he didn't some one was holding a Mexican flush. He was for quittin', he felt he had lost the rhythm or something, but was too much in the soup to stop.

Davidd got so much absorbed that he stopped belching. Raking in a big pile he advised Haynes who had just let the apricots, hazelnuts, and green apples get the better of him to take internal douches.

Walsh, who had just been jipped again, calling Maxwell, phewed his lips up against his nose, and

threw open the window for fresh air for the Y purity squad.

Franklin, back in the running again, asked Scotty to leave the room as he noticed he was sitting on his rump in a suspiciously elevated manner.

Scotty grinned and noticeably pulled himself together, like the tightening of a cord around a paper bundle; he took on all right until Walsh, who was for puttin' his claws into somebody, got to discussing his chest expansion again.

Max Maxwell who had just lit a cigarette remarked there must be an inverse ratio between chest expansion and middling extensivity.

Davidd, seeing the argument taking a philosophical turn, fell in line, and said that Scotty after all was essentially a purist, and that since thought and matter ran parallel—a bit of Spinozistic dualism—a man of Scotty's temperament would not be thinking carnally and therefore would naturally be short-circuited around such parts.

Scotty who wasn't quite following was seeing red anyway; Walsh bummed a cigarette from Maxwell as a general fumigator and returned to Scotty's diverse measurements.

Scotty came back with the same retort he had made an hour or two before, and finding it ineffectual this time, began to froth at the mouth, picked up a handful of English walnuts and banged them at Walsh, who dodged, and told Scotty he ought not to throw nuts around that way, as he couldn't spare

them. That was all right in the good old days, when men were up to the mark.

"The country has deteriorated since those days," broke in Davidd.

"No doubt about it," went on Walsh, "the strong pioneer days are over. We are a decayin' race," concluded Walsh, "now all we need is a literature."

Scotty, who wasn't interested in Spengler's chaw, socked an apple at Walsh, which grazed the tip of his mastoid. That started things: a free-for-all got under way. Franklin pasted Pett with dried apricots; Pett said to him, "For God's sake, you'll have the whole Y up here after us."

Haynes left the room in perfect disgust with his pockets stuffed with prunes and remarked as he walked out that they were a bunch of children.

Franklin sniggered and clipped him on the ear with some hazelnuts before he shut the door. Davidd and Lorry then jumped Scotty, Max Maxwell threatening to take down his trousers and apply his autostrop safety blade, if he didn't cool off, while Walsh tripped around the room like a fairy, saying, "If Petthun' won't, I will."

Pett then ditched them and skipped downstairs to the main floor for a telephone booth. Then there came a biffing at the door. Walsh ran for the Y Bible, dropping Scotty's head which unexpectedly met the cement floor. Everybody sat around him, while he read aloud, using his best Congregational throat, and looking sideways at the recumbent Scotty, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's ass. . . ."

Red Rufus coyly opened the door to let in Jack Gray who walked in with a pair of loud tan shoes and a salesman's cigar in his mouth. "Sweatin' groins, man, we thought you were the Y sec or the night watchman," howled Walsh, laying down the Bible, and puffing out his wind.

Just then the telephone bell rang.

Rufus turned purple. "Now I'll be kicked out, two and a half berries gone forever besides."

"Ga-awn for-ev-er," Franklin chorused, offering Rufus Red the sad, condoling hand.

Lorry picked up the refrain, remembering his orphanage prayer hall days, "Ga-awn for-ev-er, with your soul's endeavor, what a terrible dream!"

The telephone bell rang again. "You answer," suggested Franklin, turning to Rufus.

Rufus scowled. "No, you do, dear," said Walsh about to turn to Pett. "The dirty louse, he's ditched us," cried Walsh.

Max Maxwell went to the phone and got over the line, "Boys, this will have to be put a stop to."

"All right," answered Maxwell, "take your krap, Pett, and come right up. Gray is here."

They all went back to the poker table again; there came a quiet tapping at the door.

"That's that ditchin' louse," whispered Walsh, grabbing a pillow which he doubled up, getting Haynes square in the face as he was let in by Franklin.

Behind him followed Pett. "Boys, the secretary

downstairs is sure sore; I believe Hibbens must have reported us."

"How do you know, Pettdarlin'; what were you doin' in Herbie-Dear's room?" came back Walsh.

Jack Gray held out his hand to Pett, while slipping out of his coat with the other.

"Hello, Pett, has Griffith made you a movie stellar yet? I hear Bobbie Herron has just committed suicide so you could get your big chance."

Franklin was grinning again. Gray then sat down on the cot next to the table in his vest. He pulled out a couple of buck's worth of change and stacked it on the table according to denominations.

Jack Gray who was a jazzhound in more than one way before his several operations still played around Solomon's Dance Palace on upper Figueroa. He had come from a small town outside of Ann Harbor, gone to college for a year and then come with his widowed mother to L.A., where he started to run around more than ever. He still went to Solomon's because it had memories for him; he had met there a peach of a looking kid, who had given him the clap; after he had been cured by a doctor, he went back to Solomon's again afterwards and ran into her on the dance floor. They got to talking, took a marshmallow split at the tables, and then he took her home. He went up to her room, as he always had, and they got to talking again; anyway, since that first mishap he took to carrying Merry Widows in his vest pocket. But something must have broken as he had to go back to the doctor to get cured all over again. Any-

how, he always said, she sure was one peach of a lily.

Gray, who was always pushing his one year at college in everybody's face, got into an argument about words with Lorry who liked to fling off highfalutin sentences.

Walsh said Lorry packed a mean mitt at Webster's dic.

Lorry, whose daily street-car rides to the end of the Moneta Avenue line or out beyond Hollywood were a continual source of amusement to Maxwell, was touched again on that score. When he wasn't dish-washin' in lunch rooms on Main Street he was taking street-car rides to the end of some line, sticking his knob out of the fresh-air window for all he was worth.

"Have you had your street-car ride today?" asked Max, quietly sticking three bucks in his side pocket.

"No, but have you had your chocolate malt?" returned Lorry.

This aside business was Greek to the rest of the guys who wanted to get in on it. Lorry had been watching Maxwell trying to rebuild his vitality with rich creams and Horlick's egg malts with a great deal of private speculation and kidding.

Davidd, who wasn't paying any attention to the jabber between them, was bent on proving the efficacy of the rubber waterbag over and above that of nuts and dates to Red Rufus who had dropped out of the klondike three and a half berries in the hole and wasn't much on listening to Davidd's chaw.

Red Rufus couldn't keep his eyes off Max Maxwell whom he held responsible for his condition. Earlier, when stud had been making his nose run he had tried, ineffectually enough, to reconcile Maxwell's communism with his practical habits and had asked for the gracious return of two and a half bucks. Maxwell had given him one of those wild west dime novel poker smiles and passed up the remark.

Davidd was still at him, employing his deadliest dialectics, while crunching an apple, but Red Rufus was visibly too downhearted to argue; after coming up against a hard brick wall like Maxwell he had almost become philosophical enough to realize the futility of arguments.

Franklin, who was out also, was shaking his head dolefully and patting Red on the back in a comradely manner. He said he knew how it was; he had dropped eighty cents himself. Red moved away, feeling too superior to answer that one. Davidd continued nagging away at him.

Pett who was still running fool's luck was calling everybody and sort of spoiling the game, Walsh thought anyway, as he couldn't seem to get his paws on a pile ever since that nut had started to stack up the coppers. Walsh had quieted down; he had dropped ninety-five cents in the last twenty minutes and had cut his finger with his pocketknife while whittling the leg of the table.

Scotty was airing himself on the cot and thinking about another dollar raise he might get by Christmas.

Max Maxwell who started to play a stiffer bluff

game than ever to scare Pett out took to singing some of the best known classics he could recall to mind.

Red who had a photograph of himself with a bow-wing collar on the bureau and claimed he had once sung in the Metropolitan as an understudy cleared his throat; Franklin assisted him and unloosed his shirt collar.

Scotty cheered up and stretched himself.

Gray and Maxwell were out for blood; they were laying steep side bets against one another and Max who had relieved him of three berries began to tune up in real fashion to celebrate the coming Yuletide.

Walsh then announced for Scotty's special delectation that the latter would offer an organ recital, if testical indispositions would allow. Scotty growled. Max Maxwell's Adam's apple bobbing up and down, he tenorized: . . .

"It was Christmas in the workhouse,
The day of all the year,
The warden was making his daily rounds
Spreading the Christmas cheer.
'Good mawnin'' said the warden,
'Merry Christmas to yuse alls,'
And as he passed back up the aisle,
The prisoners answered, 'Ba-aalls!'"

"I'll raise you five," interrupted Walsh who had managed to get a flush.

"The hell you say," came back Maxwell, "I'll see your five and raise you another five."

Gray who was just sucking along to see what it was all about contributed.

Pett counted out twenty-five pennies to call and raise the pot another five. He rubbed his hands together like an Indian just getting smoke out of his twigs.

Lorry dropped out right then and there.

Max Maxwell turned his cards down; nobody would be jackass enough to play against Pett's raise; that guy wouldn't bluff if he held five aces. He always played an open game; this was the first time he had ever had guts enough to raise, recollected Max.

Walsh, seeing Maxwell drop out, got shaky. "Ninety cents out already," he recalculated to himself, "that unthinkin' idiot is probably holdin' a royal flush."

He pushed his cards away from him and got up from the table in disgust and as he moved toward the cot Scotty stuck out his foot and tripped him up. Walsh sailed into him and Gray and Maxwell had to step between them.

"Come on, don't be a sorehead," advised Gray opening up his mouth affably, "I'm about five times as much in as you are."

Then they went back to their seats again; Gray studied awhile, watching Pett's grinning face and then slipped his cards into the pack.

Just at this moment Haynes dropped in again; while Pett was raking in the pile, Franklin grabbed his cards, looked them over, and said, "Wow!" Pett

trying to take them away from him started to scuffle and they rolled into Haynes who had just time to dig into the dried prunes again. He walked out in a huff.

Walsh who had caught a glimpse of Petts' cards got red in the face; Maxwell looked amused.

Davidd, who was still bothering the life out of Rufus and hadn't been playing for a couple of hands, giggled out, losing most of the crunched hazelnuts between his teeth.

Scotty parted the scufflers and Walsh trying to come back to his usual self, said, "Don't be rowdy, boys."

Red said he was getting sleepy and started to undress; Franklin picked up his socks and put them out on the fire escape to air. Gray put on his coat; he was five bucks out and thought he had paid enough for the boys' entertainment. Red Rufus, between the sheets, started to hum.

"Tell me, why days are lonesome, Tell me why nights are blue, Tell me why all the sunshine, Comes just at one time, When I'm with you, Why do I hate to go dear, And hate to say good-bye, Somehow it's always so dear, And if you know, dear, Please tell me why."

Even Red was coming out of it, and Maxwell, in order to cheer him, said if he continued in that vein, he would soften, and might consider coming to terms with him. Well, Red who was giving the boys a hint that he wanted to put the lights out and get some sleep seemed suddenly renewed. Gray came over and carried on the tune in a low, subdued voice. Walsh,

spitting on his sideburns to make them look slicker came away from the mirror above the washstand and joined in.

Maxwell hadn't budged from the table and was suggesting "heads I win, tails you lose" to Pett. Pett caught on after the second loss and they finally got together with Lorry playing with pennies "odd man wins."

The boys at the cot were pulling some quartet stuff, with Red assuming a distinguished baritone manner. Franklin took down the photograph from the bureau and handed it round for the boys to look over. Gray, who didn't rate so high, since his last serious operation, asked Scotty how he stood the gaff.

"Aw, come on," said Franklin, "everybody's been picking on Scotty. Think up another."

"Well," said Gray, "I only wanted to get a younger man's point of view. I'm thirty now, but before I went to Albuquerque, I could stay two hours with the best of them."

"Aw," broke in Walsh, "Scotty's been reading 'Keeping Fit' for weeks now trying to make a comeback. But they never do, you know."

Anyway, Gray offered his congratulations to Scotty, said he was probably bashful before company and asked Lorry to be sure and meet him next Saturday night for a little workout at Solomon's.

Now that the poker evening had really broken up Walsh felt out in the cold again and began to reconsider what he could have done with the ninety cents he had farted away to those bums. Davidd was hic-

coughing a bit and was now trying to get the life story of Red Rufus, who had—just as Gray had reached the door—gotten as far as Indianapolis. Scotty had a bellyache and wouldn't budge. Max, Lorry, and Pett were heading for a malted milk at the Orchid soda fountain on 7th. Lorry yelled at Davidd to come along but he didn't seem to hear.

When they got onto Hope Street the three of them bumped into Walsh who looked mopy; Pett ran into him and Lorry asked him to fall in. They hadn't gotten away from the Y front steps, when Davidd came running down to get in on the party; he said, he thought a chocolate malt might help his hic-cough.

Nearing the corner, Pett turned around to look at a spiffin'-looking jane who was skidding down toward 8th and Hope Streets and from whom Pett thought he had gotten the high sign.

"Oh, boys," squeaked Pett, about to put on the accelerator.

"Now Petthun!" said Walsh, sticking out his foot to trip him up and grabbing him by the coat.

The next Saturday afternoon Max and Lorry were in the Y shower baths on the seventh floor. There was a marble partition between them which rested on two steel rods about a foot and a half from the cement floor and went up as high as another five. Lorry, who was feeling a bit playful, was banging pieces of broken Palmolive soap at Max over the partition and singing some of California's fiery na-

tional anthems, as the agreeably warm water sprayed over his naked chest and legs. Taking breathing exercises under the shower he was bawling out in high spirits, . . .

“Here’s to California,
The land of the brave and the flea,
The land of the rich,
And the sonofabitch,
And also the heathenchinee.”

Lorry who was letting his patriotic fervor get the better of him looked about him for heavier hunks of soap to paste at Max, while the latter, who was bidding his time, was determined to knock the holy hell out of him, when he got hold of him after the shower.

“All right,” said Max, just getting a smack in the eye with a chunk of soap, “for every one I get, you’ll get ten maulers in the ribs.”

“Will you cut it out, if I do?” answered Lorry, some other bit of strategy in his mind.

“I make no promises.”

Lorry then quieted down, soaped himself noisily, then stealthily crept through the space between the marble partition and the rods it was resting on. Then he lightly ran around to the toilets on the other side, crept into the compartment next to Max’s shower, got on the stool, and while Max was busily rubbing himself down, his eyes in the opposite direction looking toward the door, he put his arm over and turned on full force the hot-water faucet, and ran like hell’s bells out. The scalding water, almost burn-

ing out the pimples on his lean back, Max Maxwell let out a bitchin' oath, dashed outside the compartment, looked around him crazily, picked up a toilet plunger standing in the corner, flew after him out into the hallway, past two maids gathering up soiled bedsheets. He ditched them by going in the opposite direction, and they only saw Lorry tearing up the flight of steps in front of them without a stitch on.

The maids immediately took the freight elevator down to the main floor and entered a complaint against Lorry Lewis, who they said was prowling about the halls for their special benefit without a thread of clothing to him.

The social secretary who was getting sick and tired of that sort of thing going on in the Y dormitories telephoned his room right away and asked him to attire himself decently and see him at once.

Lorry felt he was cooked for sure this time but could see no way out; at first, he thought of going to Max's room to see what he could think of but he knew he was in for a mauling if he stuck around that bird while that hot water was still cutting him up. He avoided the elevator; he didn't want the operator to be smirking him.

The secretary was on his high horse from the very start; he didn't get a chance to put a word in. Max Maxwell, who expected the Y to be on its roller skates, dressed in a hurry, and walked by, casual-like, the maids who were discussing the untoward incident with Herbert Hibbens, who maintained it was very immoral for a boy to be exposing himself

to the opposite sex. Max Maxwell, duly appreciative of Herbert Hibbens' point of view, went on down to the main floor. Standing aside so that he couldn't be seen by either of them he watched the secretary laying down the law to Lorry who didn't even make deaf and mute signs. To cut the matter short the secretary told him to pack his effects and to clear out in a jiffy.

After Lorry went upstairs to his room Max Maxwell came over, gave the Y man a Masonic handshake and before putting in a defense for the defendant, removed according to legal procedure, any tincture of moral turpitude or any suspicion thereof that might be attributed to the person prosecuted. The secretary however, was mulish; he was all for wiping out the vermin. Anyway, he wouldn't say a word one way or the other. After that Maxwell advised Lorry to unpack the one pair of socks and b.v.d.s which he had loaned him and keep his pants on in future.

CHAPTER XIV

SOLOMON'S DANCEPALACE

Solomon's Dancepalace took up almost a block on either side of which hung Japanese lanterns. Saturday night was always a big time for the L.A. jazz-hounds who shook a wicked hoof; the foxtrot had replaced the shottische, and the old time waltz was reserved for mothers' night. Solomon's had the protection of the three muses, or, as the Saturday nighters, looking for gash, called them, the three Rhea Sisters. That night Solomon was putting on a jazz wedding and although it was only 9.30 the fellows waiting outside for their special partners could already tell it was sure getting the crowds. A hundred dollars in gold was being awarded to the couple who were getting married to the tune of Solomon's finest syncopated.

Jack Gray came along leaning on a heavy cane; it gave him an air and he liked it.

Gray was looking quite well and seemed to be out-living his hospital days; for seven months he had lain in a ward, his face always downward in the pillow, the bedsheets irritating his belly like an itching scurf. A surgeon had removed some bone from his right knee, and after scraping the tubercular part of the lower spine, had used it successfully as a cement. That had toned down Gray considerably; although he went through no penitentials he was

more careful and quiet. He made a few dates with the hospital nurses after he was discharged but he didn't go very far with them, as they had matrimonial notions, and they didn't mean anything to him that way. He was thinking of opening up a smart haberdashery shop in one of the resorts and taking things easily.

Before his illness he had been a crack salesman covering a wide northwestern territory but he knew that was past. Hotel broads, sporting women around lobbies, the high-tone, Havana tobacco-smelling air about the inside cigar stand, catching a night flyer at the last moment, meeting a classy jane on a Pullman, and then—he knew those days were over. He had enjoyed the air about that; there was something about it that still lingered vaguely in his nostrils. Women still looked at him speculatively; but what was the use; he didn't know why he went to Solomon's any more; he couldn't afford to take chances again; all that was behind him. But still he liked going through the snappy part of the game again; it gave him a kind of nervous excitement, which still held for him the illusion of expectancy, although afterwards, it made him bleak all over; it was all too skeletal. He couldn't bear to think there were no more surprises left for him, and although he continued to gad about a bit he had a new slant on the future. He had worked up an obsession for purity, which he was looking for in some sweet, tulle-like marriageable girl of a good family and a decent-sized settlement.

"Well," he smiled affably, opening up his mouth as though he was going to put a cigar in it, "what's the good word, Lorry."

"They're pulling off a jazz wedding tonight," answered Lorry, as they bought their admission tickets.

A circular wooden railing set off the dance floor, which was all waxed and slicked up as a mulatto's sweaty face. The jazzstand was in the center of the floor. They came in at the beginning of a foxtrot; the saxophones were playing up to the electric bulbs. The fast cuties, who worked in department stores, and hadn't passed the twenty-three mark were standing up, holding hands with some other girl friend, while they slid about jazzily, humming the tune of the foxtrot up through their noses, and making geometrical lozenges with their legs.

The pretty boys, who were shipping clerks during the day, were speeding up and down, with long strips of dance tickets in their hands, sizing them up, and getting a range on the lineup to see what the evening looked like.

The restaurant cashiers, salesladies in Bullocks, and counterwomen in the older established stores, who had stepped into their thirties a bit back, were seated on camp chairs on the less conspicuous side of the hall. Their sitting positions usually depended upon the kind of legs they had to show.

At the tables were sitting couples who had come earlier and hadn't warmed up yet for the dance. Some of them were drinking punch and touching

knees to get the feel of bodies in jerky, syncopated, crazy-brained motion in them.

Lorry was still biding his time; he was pale, sick-looking under the jaundiced electric lights. He was shaky about a turndown and felt uneasy about getting on the floor. He felt as stiff as an ungreased door hinge and thought he could hear his kneebones creaking every time he moved. Gray was flirting off-handedly with a kid who worked behind the counter at the Y cafeteria.

Three dances had passed; Lorry was trying to work up enough courage to ask a jane standing apart, who seemed somewhat lonely. She was chewing gum inconspicuously, and in her neatly tailored suit looked like a refined stenog. He went by her a couple of times, gave her a furtive glance, but getting no return, went on pretending he was looking for somebody. Finally, he went up to her and asked rather lowly, as though he was expecting a refusal before he got the words out, "May I have your next foxtrot?"

She looked him over with an imperturbable dryness, tongued her wad of gum into her left cheek, and said, "No, I guess not."

Lorry slunk off, craning his neck again while he was still near her, and, biting his lip, said loud enough so that those about could hear, "Nope, he's not here."

He came upon Gray again who was holding and swinging hands with the Y countergirl, and working up a shine in his eyes that appeared wicked. He introduced Lorry to her; she said, "Glad to meet

you," and went on playing her eyes back at him, while he edged up closer to her. Lorry pardoned himself and got just near the periphery of the standing crowds.

It looked hopeless; there was no chance for him there, he thought. He had better find a seat over in the bleachers, where the sitting dames were now moving their skirts up a bit above the knees. He might have some luck there, but he hesitated; he might risk it again. Standing two couples from him he saw another customer of Solomon's who had the manner of a steady client; she used her professionally heavy buttocks to advantage, and as far as age was concerned was more in her own company in the left bleachers. He had once come across her at Solomon's on mothers' night. He asked her for a waltz which was played once in four times and which was just beginning. No one appearing, she accepted him, giving him a landlady's fast once-over to determine whether he had enough for his room and keep.

He couldn't seem to get started; he bumped a jazzy couple who were just gettin' mooded up for a dreamy waltz; they glowered; her partner, with a flashy bow tie rubbed his patent leather against his imitation tuxedo, and said, "Hire a hall, man."

The broad in his arms said in an aside manner, licking the rouge of her lower lip against the upper one, "Why doesn't he take up truck driving instead?" Her partner giggled over that one, and they slid off with renewed pep, making keen dips and then taking a curve at high gear.

Lorry trying to apologize at first, slipped and came down like a hobnail on his partner's foot. He whispered an "excuse me," to which she returned with a smile which had a double face to it, "sure, what else can I do?"

He couldn't make out what was the matter with him; he felt burnt out; his hair lay about his soured forehead in a dead-dry heap, as hair growing on a corpse, he thought. Well, maybe he needed oiling up, he reflected, endeavoring to make light of himself. She appeared to think so too, for after the first few steps, she stood off from him in a perpendicular, matronly way, smiling at recognizable mouths and legs as they glided serpentiningly by. He tried to talk, to overcome the bitterness in the back of his throat, and fumbling over a "come here often," and receiving an "often enough to keep off of other people's feet," he closed up, when a pair coming by fast ran into him, knocking the sharp end of his crazy bone into her ribs. He stopped, turned about square, waiting for an apology from the couple who had unbalanced him. But they were gone. Anyway, he wanted her to see it was none of his fault.

Her face became tight all over after that; she began to manfully interfere with his leading, taking the direction in her own hands. As they were almost upon the exit gate, the band stopped, and the crowds moved out through the various gates. Still trailing at her side he said as they were on the other side of the railing, "Thank you very much."

She turned toward him, as though she had com-

pletely forgotten he was there. "I should think you would," she countered, planting herself fast on the spot and immediately taking up with one of those high blood-pressured faces, who had lived in L.A. for years, but who always looked as though he had just come in from Davenport, Iowa.

After that he went over to the soda fountain and ordered up a milkshake; he felt all congested and knotted up inside and thought perhaps a drink would cool him off. He gulped it down, paid the sodasquirt, and putting out his hand to get his change touched the fingers of a woman beside him. "I'm sorry," he said, "is that your change? I wasn't looking."

"Oh, that's nothing, only a dime anyway," she smiled agreeably.

"Everybody is sure mixed up in here," he continued, keeping up the conversation. "Are you going to wait to see the jazz wedding?"

"I don't know; it's sort of stuffy in here."

They walked along together to the camp chairs in the bleachers. He looked at her more critically, as they sat down. Her face wasn't much, round, small features. She lifted up her leg in order to put her dress down over her black silk-stockinged knee.

"Where you from?" she asked interested.

"Oh, anywhere."

"The east, I suppose," she added.

"Yes, Cleveland, if that's east. Are you one of the fallen angels?" he went on, opening up.

"Well, I could be," she laughed, appearing preten-

tiously wicked and pleased with her ready reply, "if the right devil came along."

"Well, don't go any farther, Miss—by the way, what's your name?"

"Miss Dill," she assisted, "but not sour, I hope."

"All right, don't forget," he returned, taking her hand on that.

"Let's dance this," he said, feeling suddenly limber and spry. A jazzy foxtrot struck up; it was the latest hit of the month. The nigger jazzband was rating high with the dancers by this time; everybody seemed to have gotten the syncopated fever.

"Sure enough," she answered, rising. He put his arm around her waist, helping her through the packed crowd. The mulatto leader poured through the megaphone: . . .

"Vamp a little lady
Vamp a little lady
Everybody knows the vamp
Vamp a little lady
Vamp a little lady
Jiggle like a lady
She will like it maybe
Do a little whatnot
Do a little foxtrot
When you cuddle up—
Don't fight. . . ."

At this he came up closer, grazing her hair with his lips, and whirled her about.

"You sure shake a mean leg," she said, leaning heavily against his arm.

At this point Mr. Solomon himself mounted a platform in the middle of the dance pavilion and announced the jazz wedding.

"The bride, Marcelle White, is a little girl from Dixie," he throated through a megaphone which he borrowed for a moment from the leader.

The jazzband chorused in, the saxophones playing up to her, and the mulatto grabbing the megaphone from Mr. Solomon, tenored through it in a southern, brownskin voice, "I read a lot about heaven, But give me Dixie all the time. . . ."

The crowds brought down the house, the pen-pushers stamped their feet, while the shipping clerks whistled through their fingers.

Then for the benefit of the bridegroom they played, "You'd Be Surprised," which got everybody to laughing good-humoredly.

Then to put the legshakers in a sentimental mood, Mr. Solomon whispered to the leader to play a score from the light opera, "Madame Sherry." Colored lights were focussed on the dancers, softening the running rouge on the younger janes' lips and giving a vaudeville luster to their tuxedoed partners.

Then to get over a carnival atmosphere the players in the jazzband tossed confetti into the faces of the sweller-looking kids, which their partners kissed off. There was a low, quiet scraping of thinsoled shoes; the dancers, made misty and unreal through the changing rays of colored lights upon them, swayed

moodily, falling insensibly into a slow, funereal, tango tempo. Then the mulatto richly megaphoned: "Every little movement has a meaning of its own." This took the pavilion by surprise, and there followed some scattered tittering, which was taken up in a more general laughter directed at the bride and groom standing in the middle of the platform behind Mr. Solomon.

The bride smiled coyly while the groom twisted his well-massaged neck against his white Arrow collar, and looked wise. The justice of the peace entered, got up on the platform, took out his Bible, and the band jazzed up, "Do you take this woman to be your wife? I do, I do," while the bride and groom, nodding their heads like marionettes controlled from the rear by wires, did a peppery jig to the tune.

After the marriage ceremony was over, Mr. Solomon handed a hundred dollars in gold to the bride, the crowd clapped, and the orchestra oozed out. . . . "I left my love in Avalon, And sailed away. . . ." Then the groom jumped down, and catching his bride in his arms, to cart her away, the mulatto leader chuckled darkly, and baritoned gutturally, "Poor Butterfly." The house howled, and made for the cloakrooms and lavatories.

Outside they moved along with the scattered crowd for the next block, and then they turned off Figueroa at 10th. The stuffiness from the electric lights and dancers packed together on the waxed floor began to wear off as soon as the street air was on him. Lorry became reflective and absent-minded, not hearing

her chatter. She noticed it and became distant herself. Although he didn't know how far she would go, still he was worried. She didn't look like a whore, but then, how did he know, anyway. He had forgotten to see Gray before he left; he might have touched him for a couple of Merry Widows, which, he said, he always had handy in his vest pocket in case of emergency. When they got to her door she pulled the key out of her purse, put her foot over the threshold, and extended her hand with a "Well, good night, Mr. Lorry." For a moment he felt like an adolescent, who was being put in his place by a chaperon.

"You're not going right in?" he smiled feebly.

"I have to get up early in the morning for work."

"Oh, do stay a bit," he cajoled, putting his foot in the doorway too.

"No, I can't, the landlady doesn't like that on her front doorsteps."

"Well, let's go up to your room," he laughed. He came up nearer to her, tweaked her nose, ran his fingers through her hair.

"No, I really can't," she replied backing away from him. "Call me up some day next week."

"That's too long. Besides how do I know I'll live that long," he answered, covering her breasts semi-circularly with his hands.

"Well, you don't believe in losing time, do you? I'll stay for a moment, if you'll behave."

"How?" he asked.

"By stop doing what you're doing."

"But what am I doing?" he laughed, his fingers running over her softly upholstered parts. She caught hold of his hands.

"Tie these behind your back," she said a little insistently. "Besides, I'd rather have you talk to me. I like to hear you talk."

"But how about the landlady upstairs?" he shook his head, his fingers curiously straying again. They stood in the dark hallway.

Later, he went off, brusksly saying good night to her. He moved on toward 10th again. The evening sky had the artificial grayness gotten through theater lighting effects. The winter leaves were rolled up; they hung on the branches impotently. They appeared diseased, perhaps, he ruminated, a foreboding to him. "Ninety-eight out of every hundred get it from whores, the other two from toilet stools, and they're liars," he remembered, repeating a line out of some sex pamphlet distributed by the U.S. public health service. Perhaps, he would go through some sort of clinical conversion; it might make a change in him; convalescents had visions, he had heard. Some kind of hospital calamity might push him out of the monotonous dead level he had been in for months. He couldn't seem to get a kick out of anything any more. The Y, the morgue-looking marble around the lobby, those jumpy, idiotic jazzsongs jangling away, like some crazy round-and-round carrousel music—God, he hadn't really known he had been up against all that.

Perhaps, he would go east, get out of it all, he

could run away; but he couldn't go side-door Pullman again, that was finished. Boing, sleeping in coal cars, riding those railroad bronchos, going to strange hotel rooms, the ghastly plaster inside those empty clothesclosets, walking the streets—all that was done, but then, how did he know? Anyhow, if he got the clap he would go to the Los Angeles City Hospital; maybe, those enamelled iron beds, the white sheets, the medical immaculateness of it all, might do something to him. Something had to happen; and he knew nothing would. . . .

Brussels.

October 10, 1928.

12. Karlqvist The Book of Songs
(bilingual text w/ transliteration)

Museum of Far Eastern
Antiquities, Stockholm

(c. \$4.50)

A NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

EDWARD DAHLBERG was born in 1900 in a charity maternity hospital in Boston and at the age of five committed to a Catholic orphanage. Before reaching his twelfth year he was an inmate of a Jewish orphan asylum, where he remained until he was seventeen. The next five years were spent in a kaleidoscopic succession of occupations, which took him all over the country. He has been a Western Union messenger boy in Cleveland, trucker for the American Express, driver of a laundry wagon, cattle drover in the Kansas City Stockyards, dishwasher in Portland, Oregon, potato peeler in Sacramento, bus-boy in San Francisco, longshoreman in San Pedro, clerk in a clinic, and vagabond everywhere. He matriculated at the University of California in 1922 and took a degree in the Department of Philosophy at Columbia University in 1925. He has contributed to a number of magazines, including "The Criterion" of London, "The Fortnightly Review" and "The New Republic." *Bottom Dogs* was begun in Monte Carlo and completed in Brussels. MR. DAHLBERG is now at work on a second novel which will deal largely with the mother of Lorry Lewis.



from THE INNER SANCTUM of
SIMON and SCHUSTER
Publishers • 37 West 57th Street • New York

BOTTOM DOGS \$2.00

"BOTTOM DOGS is the back-streets of all our American cities and towns," said Edmund Wilson when this book first appeared in 1930 under the imprint of Simon & Schuster. And Alfred Kazin later called Edward Dahlberg an "impressionist of contemporary horror" who saw life essentially "as an experience in oppression."

Long out-of-print, **BOTTOM DOGS** still stands in the main line of American "proletarian naturalism" and the social novel of the 1930's. The subsequent flood of American naturalist or realist writing, from James T. Farrell to Jack Kerouac, today makes **BOTTOM DOGS** seem neither so shocking nor so original as when it first was published, yet Dahlberg helped break the ground for that American "Road" which led Westward (and back) through orphan's homes, barbershops, dancehalls and YMCAs, from Kansas City to Cleveland, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Edward Dahlberg (whom certain critics of the 1930's considered already "exhausted by his own sensibility") has since written, among other books, **THE FLEA OF SODOM, BECAUSE I WAS FLESH, THE SORROWS OF PRIAPUS**, and **CAN THESE BONES LIVE**, all published by New Directions.

COVER PHOTO BY SIMPSON KALISHER